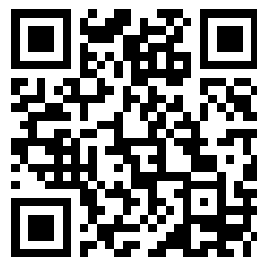


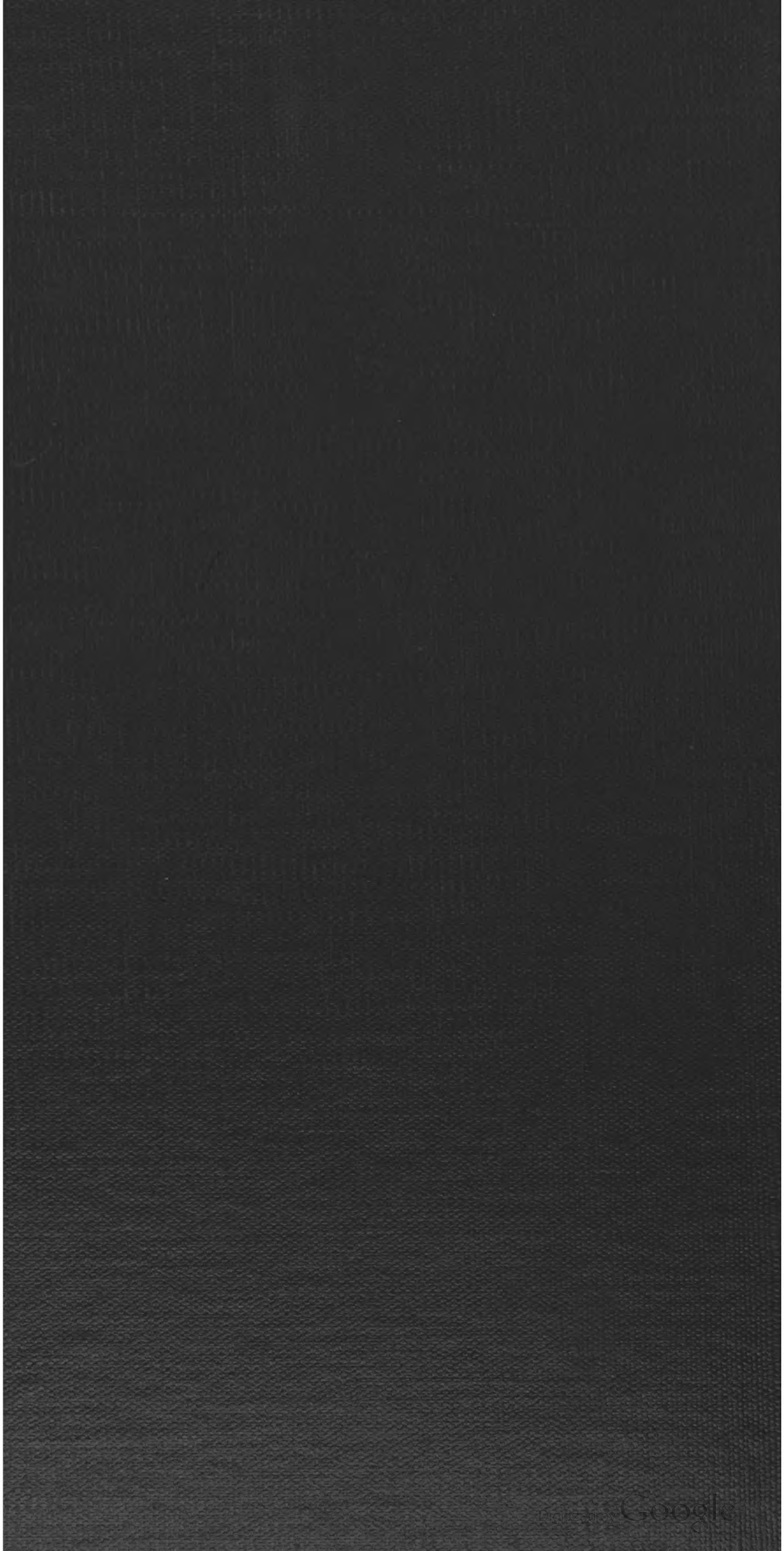
---

This is a reproduction of a library book that was digitized by Google as part of an ongoing effort to preserve the information in books and make it universally accessible.

Google<sup>TM</sup> books

<http://books.google.com>





HARVARD COLLEGE  
LIBRARY



FROM THE BEQUEST OF  
CHARLES SUMNER  
CLASS OF 1830

*Senator from Massachusetts*

FOR BOOKS RELATING TO  
POLITICS AND FINE ARTS

From the  
Fine Arts Library  
Fogg Art Museum  
Harvard University











ENGLISH ILLUMINATED  
MANUSCRIPTS

*Strictly limited to an edition of 300 copies,  
of which this is No. 183.*











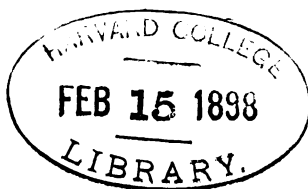
°  
ENGLISH  
ILLUMINATED  
MANUSCRIPTS

BY SIR EDWARD MAUNDE THOMPSON, K.C.B.



°  
LONDON  
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER  
AND COMPANY, LIMITED  
1895

\* FA 112, .3, 06F



*Summer fund.*

Edinburgh : T. and A. CONSTABLE, Printers to Her Majesty

## TABLE OF PLATES

PLATE	TO FACE PAGE
1. Beginning of the Gospel of St. Luke, from the 'Lindisfarne Gospels' or 'Durham Book'; about A.D. 700. (Cottonian MS., Nero D. iv.) . . . . .	9
2. David playing on the Lyre, from 'St. Augustine's Psalter'; early 8th Century. (Cottonian MS., Vespasian A. i.) . . . . .	13
3. Illustration of Psalm ix., from a Psalter; 11th Century. (Harleian MS. 603) . . . . .	17
4. Scenes from the 'Psychomachia' of Prudentius; 10th and 11th Centuries. (Additional MS. 24199; and Cottonian MS., Cleopatra C. viii.) . . . . .	19
5. Adoration of the Magi, from the Benedictional of St. Æthelwold; about A.D. 970. (MS. of the Duke of Devonshire) . . . . .	21
6. The Crucifixion, from a Psalter; late 10th Century. (Harleian MS. 2904) . . . . .	23
7. Beginning of Psalm LII., from a Psalter; 11th Century. (Arundel MS. 60) . . . . .	24
8. Scenes from Ælfric's Paraphrase of the Pentateuch, etc.; early 11th Century. (Cottonian MS., Claudius B. iv.) . . . . .	25

# TABLE OF PLATES

PLATE	TO FACE PAGE
9. Scenes from the Life of David, from a Psalter; 12th Century. (Cottonian MS., Nero C. iv.) . . . . .	31
10. David playing on the Harp, from a Psalter; 12th Century. (Royal MS. 2 A. xxii.) . . . . .	35
11. Page from a Bible; 13th Century. (Royal MS. 1 D. i.) . . . . .	37
12. Page from the Psalter of Alphonso, son of Edward I.; before A.D. 1284. (Additional MS. 24686) . . . . .	39
13. Scene from the Life of Offa; 13th Century. (Cottonian MS., Nero D. i.) . . . . .	41
14. Scenes from the Life of Joseph, from 'Queen Mary's Psalter'; early 14th Century. (Royal MS. 2 B. vii.) . . . . .	43
15. The Last Judgment, from 'Queen Mary's Psalter'; early 14th Century. (Royal MS. 2 B. vii.) . . . . .	45
16. Scenes from an Apocalypse; about A.D. 1330. (Royal MS. 19 B. xv.) . . . . .	53
17. Page from a Psalter; before A.D. 1339. (Arundel MS. 83) . . . . .	55
18 and 19. Initial Letters from a Bible; end of the 14th Century. (Royal MS. 1 E. ix.) . . . . .	59, 61
20. The Annunciation, from a Book of Hours; early 15th Century. (Royal MS. 2 A. xviii.) . . . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
21. Page from the Missal of St. Laurence, Old Jewry; before A.D. 1446. (Arundel MS. 109) . . . . .	65

# ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

## I

### FROM THE EIGHTH CENTURY TO THE NORMAN CONQUEST



THE history of illumination and book-decoration, as practised in England in the period anterior to the Norman Conquest, has a particular interest which altogether surpasses that of contemporary continental art of the same nature. There still exist, in fairly sufficient numbers, manuscripts produced in our own country, in the three and a half centuries between the years 700 and 1066, which enable us to judge, with something approaching to accuracy, the progress of the art used in their decoration. In them we find two distinct styles: the one having its origin in the north, the other developing in the south, of the kingdom. In the north we have the style introduced from Ireland—a style which may be termed almost purely decorative, in which figure-drawing is of so primitive and barbarous a nature that it counts for nothing from the point of view of art, but in which the marvellous interlaced designs and ribbon and spiral patterns combine to produce decorations of the highest merit, and such as have no rivals in other schools of illumination. On the other hand, in the style which arose in the south we have figure-drawing largely, and in no small

A

I

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

degree successfully, cultivated; and, at the same time, the decorative side of the art is not neglected. This developed, not with the minute accuracy and laborious ingenuity of the Irish school, but with freedom of drawing and some imitation of nature; and it has a very pleasing result.

It does not come within the scope of our subject to trace in detail the rise and development of the Irish school of book-decoration, or to examine its productions on its native soil. We must confine our attention to the result of its importation into England, and to its influence there, as far as that can be traced. The school of the south has a larger claim upon us, and its development and methods of work will be followed in some detail.

The late Professor Westwood in his great work, *Facsimiles of the Miniatures and Ornaments of Anglo-Saxon and Irish Manuscripts*, has attempted briefly, and we think with success, to show that the Irish school of ornamentation not only owes nothing to classical examples, but that it was essentially a native school working out its own ideas, untouched by exterior influences. The careful examination which he bestowed upon the extant specimens of the work of this school, and the comparisons to which he subjected them with the productions of other countries, satisfied him that we can recognise no sufficient resemblance to justify the assumption of relationship with foreign schools. Of course, we do not mean to assert that various imported objects of art, metal-work, carving, or what not, may not at an early period have suggested to the Irish workmen the lines on which their designs were to be elaborated; but that elaboration followed its own course, and there is nothing in the fully-developed work to indicate external influence, as we

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

understand the word. Westwood defines the different kinds of ornament employed in the decoration of Irish manuscripts to be formed '(1) simply by the use of dots, generally in different coloured inks; (2) by simple lines, straight or curved; (3) by the step-like, angulated patterns; (4) by the Chinese-like Z patterns; (5) by interlaced ribbons; (6) by interlaced zoomorphic patterns; and (7) by the various spiral patterns, which are by far the most characteristic of the whole.' The repetition of these designs, usually set in compartments and arranged either to form full ornamental pages or elaborate initial letters, produces an effect which, regarded as pure ornament, it would be difficult to surpass. There is some reason to assume that the illuminators of the early Irish manuscripts borrowed their patterns from other more early established industries, those of the metal-worker, sculptor, wicker-worker, or in whatever branch of art we may suppose such designs to have been used. This assumption is supported by the sudden appearance of highly-decorated manuscripts at a certain period without earlier specimens to show anything like a gradual development. It would indeed be expecting too much to look for the survival of early manuscripts in such numbers as to afford a complete chain of evidence; but if there had been a gradual growth of book-ornament spreading over a fairly extended period, we should certainly have found fuller traces of it in what survives. If we are right in our belief that the form of writing which was employed in Ireland in the earliest manuscripts was adapted in the sixth century from Roman models in a particular class of writing, something more than a century of manuscript-production would have elapsed when the brilliantly ornamented pages of the 'Book of



## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

Kells, probably executed towards the end of the seventh century, burst upon us with fully developed designs. It would be out of place to attempt to conjecture to what remote period we are to look for the origin of the Celtic patterns which we meet with in Irish illuminated manuscripts; such speculations may be carried back almost indefinitely with no satisfactory result; but it is significant that the spiral or whorl which Westwood particularises as a specially Celtic detail of ornament is to be seen in the metal-work of shields of British make as early as the first century.

The history of the introduction of the Irish style of book-decoration into the north of England is well known. In consequence of the conversion of Oswald, who became king of Northumberland in the year 635 and who had accepted Christianity during his exile in the Irish monastery of Iona, Aidan, a monk of that house, became the founder of the Northumbrian Church. He was the first bishop of the see of Lindisfarne (Holy Isle), choosing that island on the Northumbrian coast as the seat of his diocese. There was established by the brethren who accompanied him from Iona the famous School of Lindisfarne, which produced a series of finely-written and ornamented manuscripts in the Celtic style, examples of which still survive. Of these the most beautiful, as well as the most perfect and highly finished, is the manuscript in the Cottonian collection in the British Museum, which is known as the 'Lindisfarne Gospels,' or 'St. Cuthbert's Gospels,' or the 'Durham Book,' the date of which is about the year 700. The history of its origin and of its vicissitudes is so interesting that a few words may be said regarding the manuscript. It contains the Four Gospels of

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

St. Jerome's Latin version, written, as appears from a comparatively early record in the volume itself, by Eadfrith, Bishop of Lindisfarne, A.D. 698-721, in honour of his predecessor, St. Cuthbert, who died in 687. Ethilwold, who was bishop from 724 to 740, bound it; and Billfrith the anchorite wrought the jewelled metal-work with which the covers were adorned, no doubt, as we may fairly assume, in the style of the interlaced and other patterns of the ornamental pages of the volume. We are not told who were the artists engaged on these pages, which however were executed under direction of Eadfrith. The particulars here given are derived from a note written at the end of the book by the priest Aldred, an inmate of the house of Lindisfarne, who also added a 'gloss' to the Gospels: that is, he wrote, word for word, between the lines, a translation in English—a priceless monument of the Northumbrian dialect of the tenth century, the period to which the writing of Aldred is to be assigned. Aldred, it is true, gives no authority for the tradition regarding the origin of the manuscript which he transmits; and we must bear in mind that he writes more than two hundred years after the death of Eadfrith. On the other hand, the general accuracy of his statements may, we think, be accepted, for the manuscript must have been held in too much esteem in the monastery for the details of its history to have been forgotten, although they may perhaps have been magnified. There is one pleasing touch of nature in the worthy Aldred's memorandum which deserves record. After speaking of himself with all the self-abasement—'indignus et miserrimus'—which natural or conventional modesty demanded, he affectionately remembers his parents, and takes

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

care to tell us who they were—Alfred, and ‘a good woman, Tilwin.’

The manuscript remained at Lindisfarne till the time of the Danish invasion in 875, when it was carried away for safety together with the shrine of St. Cuthbert; and, as we are told by the historian, Simeon of Durham, who wrote early in the twelfth century, it was lost overboard during an attempted voyage to Ireland, and was only recovered by the intervention of St. Cuthbert himself. Afterwards it was kept at Durham, but was subsequently restored to Lindisfarne, when the priory was rebuilt as a cell to Durham Priory, and remained there until the dissolution of the monasteries. Nothing is known of its later history to the time when it came into the possession of Sir Robert Cotton, that great collector to whom we owe the preservation of so many treasures of the art and learning of the Middle Ages, who purchased it from Robert Bowyer, Clerk of the Parliaments, in the reign of James the First; and then its jewelled covers had disappeared.

The ornamentation of the volume is most perfect. The first page of each Gospel and two other pages, six in all, are in large letters of the most elaborate designs, with borders; and on a leaf prefixed to each Gospel and on one accompanying the first preface is a full-page painting or cruciform design, worked with all the wonderful combination of geometrical and interlaced and spiral patterns of the Celtic school. Besides, decoration, in keeping with these more elaborate pages, is applied to the Eusebian Canons and to the principal initial letters of the text. There are likewise four interesting portraits of the Evangelists. They are copied from Byzantine models; and, although the artist's method of expressing his ideas may be peculiar, there is to

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

be seen in them an attempt to render the originals with something approaching to accuracy, and we are rid of the extraordinary barbarism of the figure-drawing of Irish manuscripts. The difficulty of representing the folds of the draperies has proved too much for the artist's powers, who has indicated them, not by shading, but by streaks of paint of a different colour from that in which the robes themselves are painted; and in the faces the shadows of the features are marked out with lines of green paint. But, it may be asked, how and whence would the Lindisfarne draughtsman obtain the Byzantine drawings which served as his models? And it is seldom that one is in a position to give so satisfactory an answer to such a question as can be given in this instance. We know, in fact, that the text of the Durham Book is copied from a manuscript of the Gospels which was brought into this country by one of the missionaries from Rome. This knowledge we owe to the acute investigations of Mr. Edmund Bishop, the result of which he communicated to Dom Germain Morin, who has shown in the *Revue Bénédictine* (Nov.-Dec. 1891, pp. 481, 529) that the 'Capitula' or tables of sections which accompany the several Gospels follow the Neapolitan use; and that Adrian, the companion of the Greek Theodore, Archbishop of Canterbury, in his mission to Britain in the year 668, was abbat of a monastery in the island of Nisita, near Naples. That the two missionaries visited Lindisfarne we know from the pages of Bede, and we thus complete the chain. There can be no reasonable doubt that the Neapolitan manuscript from which the Durham Book derived its text was one which had been brought a few years previously from Naples by the abbat

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

Adrian ; and we venture to think that the drawings of the Evangelists which we are now considering were also very probably copied from others executed in the Byzantine style in that manuscript. Knowing, as we do, the influence exercised, particularly in Southern Italy, by Byzantine art, the supposition of the existence of such Byzantine models in a manuscript written and ornamented in Naples is in no way unreasonable. It is, of course, also possible that the English drawings may have been copied from actual Greek originals existing in some Greek manuscript left at Lindisfarne by Theodore or Adrian ; and the occurrence on the copies of the titles of the Evangelists in Greek would at first sight appear to support this view. But we think that their half-Latinised forms, *e.g.* 'O AGIOS MATTHEUS,' 'O AGIUS MARCUS,' indicate that the original drawings and inscriptions had passed through an intermediate process : that is, that actual Greek drawings and inscriptions did not come before the Lindisfarne draughtsman, but that he drew from copies, such as might have adorned the Latin Gospels of the abbat Adrian, wherein the Greek words had received Latin modifications. We can hardly believe that he would have had Greek enough to make such alterations himself, and we prefer to think that, following the usual practice, he copied exactly what he saw.

The page of the Durham Book which has been selected for reproduction, on a reduced scale, in Plate I, contains the commencement of St. Luke's Gospel, 'Quoniam quidem multi conati sunt ordinare narrationem,' and has been chosen because it is composed of a fairly representative variety of the different patterns employed in the decoration of the volume. It would be quite impossible to reproduce













## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

by any mechanical process the exquisite colouring of the original, which with its thickly-laid pigments resembles a specimen of beautifully-finished porcelain or enamel. The outline of the large Q is black, edged on the inner side with bands of straw-yellow. The spirals in the space within the bow of the letter are coloured with violet, light green, red, blue, and yellow; and the little triangular space in the centre is filled with gold—the only instance of the use of that metal in the whole design. Gold is not found at all in native Irish manuscripts, and is applied very sparingly in this masterpiece of the school of Lindisfarne. The interlacings on the bow of the letter are in sections of red and blue; those on the stem are in black and white. The birds and lacer-tine creatures are green, and white, and yellow; but the two birds at the bottom of the stem are coloured red, blue, violet, and yellow. The circles and spirals in the terminals are green, red, and violet. The borders and the corner-piece are edged with violet. In the corner-piece the birds have white wings and heads, yellow legs and crests, and green and blue necks, and, in addition to the inter-lacing of necks, crests, and legs, they are further linked together with intertwining red ribbons. In the lower border the birds have white wings edged with yellow, yellow legs and heads, and blue and red tails. In the side border there are the same colours, differently disposed. The cat's head which terminates the side-border is yellow with white muzzle; the fore-legs are blue. And this extra-ordinary creature's hind-legs and tail are at the other end of the border, which thus does duty for its body. Of the ornamental letters the U and O are coloured in harmony with the rest of the page. The dotted patterns are red. We feel that we

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

ought to apologise for this detailed and, we fear, tedious account of the colouring of this beautiful specimen of Lindisfarne work; but, in default of the actual colours in our plate, a literal description is the only means of giving an idea of the original. Nothing can excel the harmony of the whole composition, which can only be realised by inspection of the manuscript itself.

But, at the period when this beautiful book was produced, the Celtic style of ornamentation was already known also in the southern part of England. It may have been directly introduced by Irish monks at such a centre as Glastonbury; or, what is more probable, the connection between Lindisfarne and that house, which we know existed, may have made it quickly known in the south. At Canterbury it was practised as early as the beginning of the eighth century. Of that time we have a valuable manuscript in which we find ornamentation of this type executed with great skill; and, side by side with it, an instance of the adaptation of Roman art by native draughtsmen. Nothing can be more interesting for our subject than thus to see the two styles, the Celtic from the north and the classical from abroad, meeting on one page in a volume produced in the city which was the gateway for the entrance of Roman art into the country. The manuscript is a Psalter in the Cottonian collection in the British Museum, bearing the press-mark Vespasian A. i. It belonged to the Abbey of St. Augustine, and was no doubt written and ornamented in that house. And it is not only on account of its ornamentation that it is of interest; for the character of the writing is also significant and supports the view that the manuscript may, in fact, be a copy of one of the volumes

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

which were imported into England by the followers of St. Augustine. The text of the Psalms is in Roman uncial letters, a form of writing which never obtained favour with English scribes; and certain portions of the manuscript are copied in Roman rustic capitals, which were even still less adopted by them. An early tradition has even pronounced the manuscript to be one of the very volumes which were sent to St. Augustine by Pope Gregory, as recorded by Bede. Thomas of Elmham, who wrote at the beginning of the fifteenth century a chronicle of St. Augustine's Abbey, describes two Psalters, which he appears to include among the gifts which were presented by St. Augustine to Peter the first abbat; and the description of one of them so nearly suits the Cottonian manuscript that it is difficult not to believe that it is the actual volume to which Elmham refers. Of course, if it had any claim to the distinction of being one of St. Augustine's own manuscripts brought into this country from Rome, the presence in it of Anglo-Irish work could hardly be accounted for. However, it is not necessary to discuss the point. With our better opportunities for comparison, there can no longer be any question of the real age of the manuscript, and of the country where it was written and ornamented.

The decoration of the volume chiefly consists of initial letters designed in the Celtic style, but with certain modifications which betray foreign influence. Gold, which, as has already been observed, is nowhere found in Irish manuscripts, and is but sparingly used in the productions of the Lindisfarne school, is here applied with profusion; and on its surface delicate patterns were traced in black—a rare process, as it appears. We can scarcely doubt that this more magnificent and costly method of decora-

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

tion was suggested by the illuminated manuscripts of the continent. But the volume also contains a full-page design, to which we have above referred, in which Celtic and Roman art stand side by side. This page is reproduced in our Plate 2. First, examining the decorative portion of the design, we have a solid arch supported on columns, richly ornamented with interlaced and spiral patterns as well as with lozenges and rosettes. The colours are red, blue, green, lake, and light yellow, on a ground of black; but the marginal bands, the lozenges, and the rosettes are gilded, patterns having been traced on the surface of the gold, as just described. The flaking-off of the metal has to some extent destroyed these delicate designs. The prevalence of the Celtic element is evident enough in these ornaments; the spirals and interlacings are purely Celtic details, and they occupy so much space in the composition that, as a whole, it would be classed as of the Irish type. On the other hand, the foreign element is not wanting, for the three gilt rosettes which stand in the upper part of the arch are such as are found very commonly in Greek and Roman decoration. But turning to the picture, here is nothing Celtic. David is seated on his throne playing on a lyre; on each side stands a scribe, the one holding a scroll and stilus, the other a set of tablets and a stilus;<sup>1</sup> and in the foreground are two boys or young men dancing between two horn-blowers and two trumpeters. The prevailing colours are stone-blue, green, red, and brown. David's nimbus and the framework of the throne are gilt, and the lyre

<sup>1</sup> The scroll in the hand of the scribe on the left is no doubt meant for a papyrus roll (*volumen*). It is remarkable, though probably nothing more than a coincidence, that, in two instances in the Assyrian bas-reliefs in the British Museum, the scribes who are taking note of spoils are represented in pairs, one scribe using a tablet, the other a scroll. The tablets would be used for the rough draft, the roll for the fair copy.











## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

and the cross-pieces in the legs of the throne are in silver. At a glance the design proclaims itself to be of Roman origin; and it is evident that the draughtsman—who we may confidently assume to have been one of the native inmates of St. Augustine's Abbey—has done his best to make a faithful copy of the Roman original before him, without any addition or peculiar treatment of his own. The Cottonian Psalter is, then, as we have seen, a very valuable record for the history of the early book-decoration of England; and, if we are right in believing that its text may have been actually copied from one of St. Augustine's own manuscripts, and that the picture before us may be a reproduction of a classical model, we have in it a link which connects English art with the time of the Roman missionaries.

That the Celtic style of ornament was followed at Canterbury to a later date is shown in the decorated pages of a fragmentary copy of the Gospels among the Royal MSS. (I E. vi.) in the British Museum (see Westwood, *Miniatures and Ornaments*, p. 39), a manuscript of the latter part of the eighth century, which also belonged to St. Augustine's Abbey, and which, it may be added, appears also to have been one of the volumes which Thomas of Elmham enumerates as having been sent by Pope Gregory to St. Augustine. The northern style, however, was now on the decline. Soon we find quite a different class of ornamentation prevailing in the south of England, based upon a free style of drawing, and retaining only a partial reminiscence of the interlacings of the Irish school. This new southern style was founded, as we shall presently see, on late classical, or perhaps we should rather say semi-classical, models, not of the broad type of the drawing in the Cottonian

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

Psalter just described, but of a light and more graceful character. The influence of Roman models of the style of the Psalter drawing is not to be traced very clearly in English manuscripts. That such models, however, were not altogether neglected may be inferred from the style of certain miniatures in the manuscript which is known as the Psalter of King Æthelstan, and which may have actually belonged to him (Cottonian MS., Galba A. xviii.). This little volume, of foreign origin, appears, like another manuscript in the same collection, to have been sent as a present to the English king by the Emperor Otto I., who married in 929 Eadgyth, the half-sister of Æthelstan. The miniatures to which we have referred are insertions by English hands of the tenth century, and are evidently strongly influenced by later Roman or Byzantine models (see Westwood, *Miniatures and Ornaments*, p. 96). But generally the decorations of English manuscripts of this period are of that lighter style, the development of which we will now endeavour to trace.

In contrasting this, the southern style, with the productions of the Celtic school, we have, at the beginning of this article defined it as one in which figure-drawing was more specially developed. This figure-drawing is distinguished by the general lightness and delicacy of outline, the elongation of the limbs, a strange humping of the shoulders or back, in some instances almost amounting to deformity, and the peculiar treatment of the drapery to which the epithet of 'fluttering' has been given in order to describe its appearance as though agitated by the wind. In this style of drawing our Anglo-Saxon ancestors were particularly successful and attained in some instances to a beauty and grace nowhere to be found in the contemporary

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

manuscripts of the Continent, which are adorned on the more gorgeous lines of the Byzantine school. So national did this free style become, that there has been a tendency—which we think has been carried too far—to appropriate all drawings of this nature to our own country. On the contrary, it can be shown that, at least in some instances, such drawing was practised down to the tenth century, under Anglo-Saxon influence it may be, but certainly outside this country. And for its origin we must look abroad. The classical details in the earliest extant example of the style are too manifest to allow us to suggest any other country than Italy for its birth. This example is the manuscript known as the Utrecht Psalter, which once belonged to the library of Sir Robert Cotton, but is now in the University Library of Utrecht. Its antiquity, like that of other volumes whose classical details misled the experts of the day, was formerly overestimated. Its actual date may be fairly placed about the year 800; but what gives it a peculiar value is, that it has all the appearance of being practically a facsimile copy of a much earlier manuscript. Both in the character of the writing, and, we may also fairly assume, in that of the drawings, the ancient style is pretty faithfully reproduced. The ancient rustic-capital writing, which passed out of general use for the text of manuscripts some hundreds of years earlier, is employed in this volume, the scribe no doubt finding that he could thus most conveniently maintain the same setting of the text as in the archetype, and could thus leave the necessary spaces for the insertion of the drawings in conformity with those of the older volume, which we may very reasonably assume to have been at least as early as the fifth century.

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

The drawings, which are numerous, illustrate the Psalms most literally, and contain an infinite variety of subjects; and they are executed with no mean skill. Until recently they were thought to be the production of English artists; but this view can no longer be maintained, for internal palæographical evidence leaves no room for doubt that the manuscript is of Frankish workmanship. We are probably not far wide of the mark in adjudging it to the north or north-east of France.<sup>1</sup> Here, then, we have evidence of the early existence on the Continent of the style of drawing which afterwards took root and flourished so successfully in our own country; and, as we have said, the classical elements point decidedly to its ultimate Roman origin.

The Utrecht Psalter appears to have been one of the imported volumes on which the English style was to form itself. We have two later copies of the Psalter illustrated with similar, though not exactly the same, drawings as in that manuscript: the one of the eleventh century, Harleian ms. 603, in the British Museum; the other, known as the Eadwine Psalter, of the twelfth century, at Cambridge. With the latter volume we are not now concerned, as it does not fall within the period with which we are dealing. It is quoted only as an instance to show how popular the illustrated Psalter of the type of the Utrecht ms. became in England. The Harleian ms. is made up exactly in the same way as the Utrecht Psalter, that is, the text is written in triple columns (not, however, in capitals as in the older manuscript, but in the ordinary Caroline type of minuscules of the time), and the

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written, the place of origin of the Utrecht Psalter has been made a subject of research by M. Paul Durrieu, who concludes that the ms. was executed in the diocese of Reims.—*L'Origine du MS. célèbre dit Le Psautier d'Utrecht*, in *Mélanges Julien Havet*, 1895.











## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

drawings extend across the full breadth of the page. Many of the latter are the same as those in the Utrecht ms., some indeed being so exactly similar in design that they might have been copied from that volume; but generally additions are introduced and there are variations in the costume; and, again, many are altogether different. The Harleian ms. is therefore not a copy of the Utrecht Psalter itself, and leads us to infer from its variations that other versions of the illustrated Psalter were in existence in England at an early date. The drawing which we here give, on a reduced scale (Plate 3), from the Harleian ms. illustrates the 9th Psalm; but it is not easy to find in the words of text a certain explanation of all of the different scenes. God is seated in the Heavens 'judging right' (v. 4); the groups of men being slain are the enemy who are 'turned back and fall and perish' (v. 3); on the right, the heathen are rebuked (v. 5), and the idol falls from its base; in the centre are the destroyed cities (v. 6); in the foreground, the three figures seated in the canopied hall appear to be engaged in 'ministering judgment to the people in uprightness' (v. 8); and, on the left centre, the wicked are being 'turned into hell' (v. 17), which is represented as a flaming tower. The walled city on the left is probably intended for Zion, the Psalmist standing above the gate and 'showing forth praise' (v. 14); and the building on the hill on the right, from which one of the group of figures has apparently emerged, may perhaps illustrate the gates of death (v. 13). This drawing is almost an exact replica of the corresponding drawing in the Utrecht Psalter. There is the same pose of the figures, the same elongation of the limbs, and the same treatment of the draperies. Here, however, the outlines are

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

variously drawn in colours, blue, red, and green being used as well as ordinary ink.

It may here be remarked that the practice of the Anglo-Saxon artists of copying drawings from older and foreign models has scarcely been sufficiently considered by writers on the manners and customs of our forefathers, and that too much in these drawings has been assumed to be purely English. It is true that the later artists would introduce certain modifications; and it may be readily granted that to some extent they adapted details in their work, such as arms and dress, to suit the objects of their own time and country; but it is also quite as certain that they still copied exactly very much that they saw in their originals, and that many of the illustrations that appear in our histories and costume-books as English are only travesties of the early classical models.

As the Harleian Psalter forms so valuable a link in the history of Anglo-Saxon drawing, we have taken it out of its true chronological order, if we regard the period at which it was actually executed. For we have examples of this particular class of drawing dating from the previous century, the period in which it appears to have attained its full development in England. But before we proceed to notice the manuscripts which we select, for the illustration of our subject, as being of undoubted English workmanship, one must engage our attention which has been described by Professor Westwood, *Miniatures and Ornaments*, p. 107, as a specimen of English production, 'the drawings of which,' he says, 'are of great value as containing a series of representations of the habits and customs, dresses, arms, etc., of the later Anglo-Saxons,' but which we venture to think is of foreign origin. This is an illustrated copy of the 'Psychomachia,'



(1)

*Tube silent. & gladiu reconduntur imaginis.*



(2)



(3)



4.





#### ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

an allegorical Latin poem on the subjection of the vices by the virtues, written in the fourth century by Aurelius Prudentius, an officer of high military rank, who was born in Spain, and who solaced himself in retirement by composing this and other poems of a like character. The 'Psychomachia,' like the illustrated Psalter, appears to have been a favourite work for reproduction in this country, as there still survive several copies with illustrative drawings of the Anglo-Saxon period. But the manuscript in question, which formerly belonged to Archbishop Tenison's library and is now in the British Museum (Additional MS., 24199), was certainly written abroad, and we believe that its drawings were also executed on the continent. The writing is distinctly of the type which has been called Caroline minuscule, as used in the Frankish Empire in the ninth and tenth centuries. The hand was indeed occasionally adopted by English scribes of the latter century, but they stamped a character of their own upon it which is not to be mistaken. In this manuscript, which is of the latter part of the tenth century, there is no trace of the English impress upon the writing; it is altogether of the foreign type, and was probably written in the north of the Frankish Empire, perhaps in the district now the Netherlands. From the evidence of a few stray notes which have been added, we gather that the manuscript had already been brought to England in the early part of the fourteenth century; but there is nothing to show whether it was in this country at an earlier date. Now turning to the drawings, we find that a series of them has been added, to the extent of two-thirds of the poem, in the spaces left vacant by the scribe for their insertion, and that they are executed in the light sketchy style adopted by the Anglo-Saxon



## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

artists. At the same time the classical elements in the designs are very evident, and there is no doubt that they are copies of an earlier series. If we are right in our opinion that the manuscript was written abroad, these drawings must also be of foreign execution; for that they are contemporaneous with the writing is proved by the accommodation of certain contemporary marginal commentaries to keep clear of the space occupied by the drawings. They could not, therefore, be the work of Anglo-Saxon artists after the introduction of the manuscript into England; and that they are the work of Anglo-Saxon artists abroad is hardly probable. We have then in this series of drawings strong presumptive evidence that even as late as the tenth century the copying of earlier models in the light outline which became so popular in England was not confined to this country, and that on the continent, at all events in the districts opposite to our southern shore, the same style of book-decoration as our own was cultivated. It is indeed only reasonable to suppose that such should have been the case; and it is not impossible that the wide practice of this particular form of drawing in this country may have influenced the work of the artists across the channel.

To return to the Tenison 'Psychomachia,' the spaces left to receive illustrations for the rest of the poem have been only partially filled with tentative sketches, some very rough and inartistic and seemingly of later date, others, again, executed with very considerable skill by contemporary hands. We select from the latter a very prettily-drawn scene illustrating the line 'Cornicinum curva æra silent; placabilis implet Vaginam gladius,' etc., and a single figure from another page (Plate 4, nos. 1, 2), which, in the treatment of the drapery





5.





## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

and the wrinkled hose and sleeves, so closely resemble the Anglo-Saxon style. This manuscript too affords us an interesting instance of a peculiar method of work followed in the production of illustrated manuscripts. Some of the drawings are accompanied with descriptive titles, as in the case of the first scene in the Plate. These were written by the scribe, not by the artist, before the drawings were executed ; as is proved by the occurrence of titles in spaces which are still devoid of drawings. The scribe, in fact, copying from an earlier example, could exactly space out the words of the titles to fit the artist's copies. In one or two instances, the text itself is spaced out to admit of the insertion of drawings.

As a companion to the two specimens selected from the Tenison MS., we have added to the same Plate an interesting example from another copy of the same poem. But the manuscript from which it is taken is altogether English, both in writing and ornamentation. It is the Cottonian MS., Cleopatra C. viii., of the first half of the eleventh century. The scene represents Humility taking flight to Heaven in the presence of the Virtues :—

——' auratis præstringens aera pennis  
In celum se virgo rapit ; mirantur euntem  
Virtutes, tolluntque animos in vota volentes  
Ire simul'——

The flying figure of Humility is particularly graceful, and is only marred by the exaggeration of the open hand, a fault which appears also in the other figures. The difficulty which, in the early stages of art, seems always to have been experienced by the artist when dealing with the open hand or naked foot appears to be more prominently brought before us in Anglo-Saxon outline drawings. When

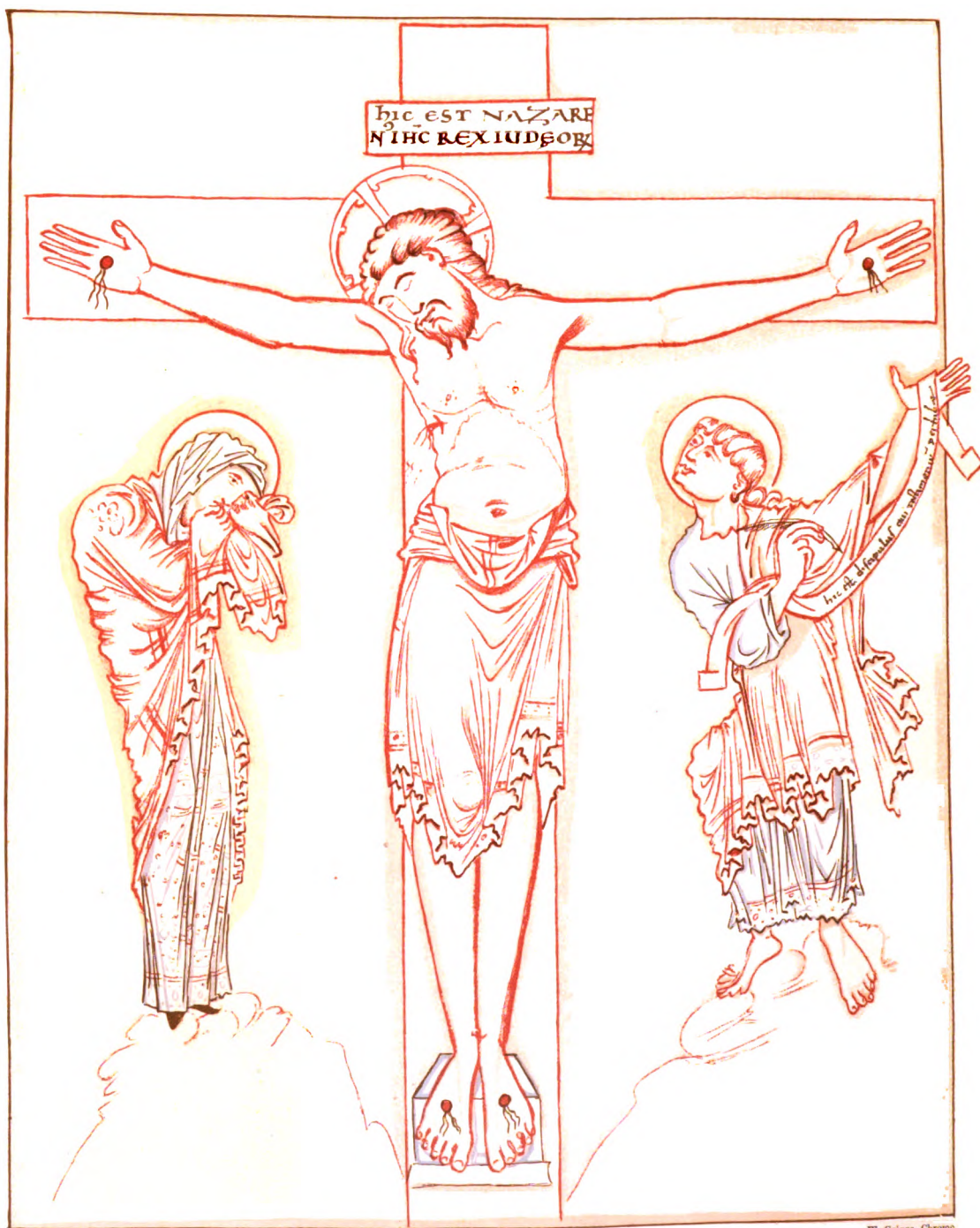
## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

the hand is clasped or the foot is booted, a fairly true proportion is observed. Sometimes the fault of drawing even goes to the other extreme, and the booted feet of women are often drawn abnormally small. But, when the fingers of the open hand or the toes of the naked foot have to be drawn, the details are immediately exaggerated.

Judging from the examples which have descended to us, the southern style of Anglo-Saxon book-ornamentation seems to have been brought to the highest perfection at Winchester, as one would naturally expect to be the case in the chief city of the kingdom and under the patronage of the successive kings from the latter part of the tenth century down to the period of the Norman Conquest. Many of the finest extant manuscripts of this class were produced in the great religious houses of that city; and of these the most beautiful and elaborate is the Benedictional of St. Æthelwold, the property of the Duke of Devonshire, and justly described by Westwood as 'the noblest of all the surviving productions of later Anglo-Saxon art.' It contains the ancient benedictional of the see of Winchester, and was written and ornamented under the direction of Æthelwold, who succeeded to the bishopric in 963 and died in 984. The date of the manuscript may therefore be placed about the year 970. It has as many as thirty illuminated miniatures and thirteen other ornamental pages, and originally contained even more, as some have evidently been cut out of the volume. To get an idea of the colouring of the miniatures, nearly all of which are fully painted and profusely gilded, the reader must refer to Westwood's *Miniatures and Ornaments*, plate xlv. As we have already noted above, in the case of the Cottonian Psalter (Vespasian







W. Griggs, Chromo





## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

A. i.), the extensive use of gold as a means of decoration in these grand examples of southern work is no doubt to be attributed to the increasing influence of the Byzantine school of ornamentation which held sway on the continent. We have to content ourselves here with presenting a reduced reprint (Plate 5, the Adoration of the Magi) of one of the plates in *Archaeologia*, vol. xxiv., where the whole series of miniatures is very carefully engraved, which will convey a fairly sufficient idea of the finished drawing and elaborate ornamentation of the original.

As a specimen of the best style of the figure-drawing of this school we place before the reader a very beautiful miniature (Plate 6) of the Crucifixion from the Harleian ms. 2904, a Psalter, of the same age as the Æthelwold Benedictional and also probably executed at Winchester. Westwood has eulogised this miniature as the finest of its kind. The outlines and modelling of the limbs and other details are drawn in a pinkish bistre, and the under-robes of the Virgin and St. John in pale blue. Importance is given to the figure of the Saviour, in the usual manner, by rendering the accompanying figures on a smaller scale; but, in order to maintain symmetry in the design and to bring them into proper position, the latter are placed upon two mounds. While the drawing has the good qualities of grace and refinement, the faults of the school, to which we have above referred, are conspicuous in the drawing of the hands and naked feet of the disciple, and in the hump-backed pose and disproportionate smallness of the lower part of the figure as well as of the feet of the Virgin.

Our remarks on the southern school of Anglo-Saxon art have been chiefly confined to the drawing of the figure-designs or miniatures; but a few

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

words must be given to the subject of its decoration. In connection with the miniatures or in full-page ornamental designs the artist most frequently drew a border surrounding the page and composed of conventional foliage interlaced and entwined with the supporting framework of the border. There can be no doubt that the germ of this foliage is to be found in the classical architectural leaf-mouldings which were imitated so much in Frankish illuminated manuscripts and were conveyed by that channel to the notice of our native artists. A good illustration of this development is before us in the border of the page which has been selected from the *Æthelwold Benedictional* (Plate 5). In the small compartments of the frame are seen sections of leaf-moulding confined within bounds, as in the case of ordinary architectural decoration; in the large rosettes which form the corner-pieces the foliage is in luxuriant growth and interlaces its shoots and leaves with the framework. The colours which the Anglo-Saxon used in his decorations are usually bright, and the effect of this variety of tints introduced in the border-designs is very pleasing. As has already been said, gold is profusely applied in the manuscripts of Winchester origin; but in other examples we find colours alone employed. Of the latter type is the page which forms the subject of Plate 7, taken from the *Arundel ms. 60*, a Latin Psalter of the eleventh century. The framework is made of long rods, perhaps osier-wands, which are tinted with pale yellow and are connected together at the corners by rings of the same colour. The foliage is in tints of red, blue, and green, relieved with white, and is laid on a background coloured in sections with stone-blue and green. The initial letter Q is in keeping with





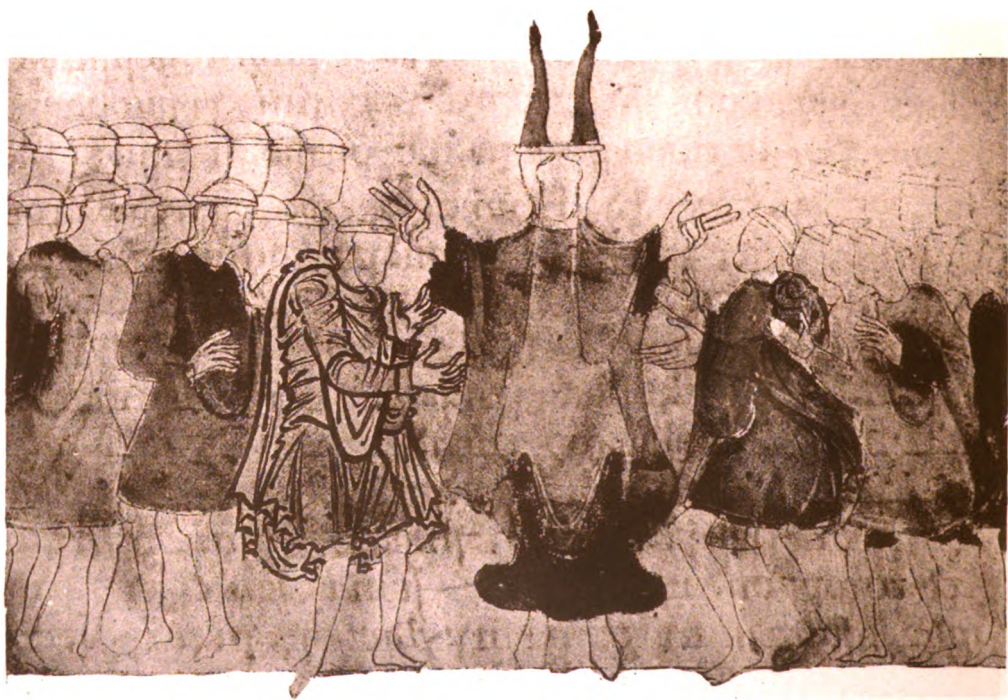
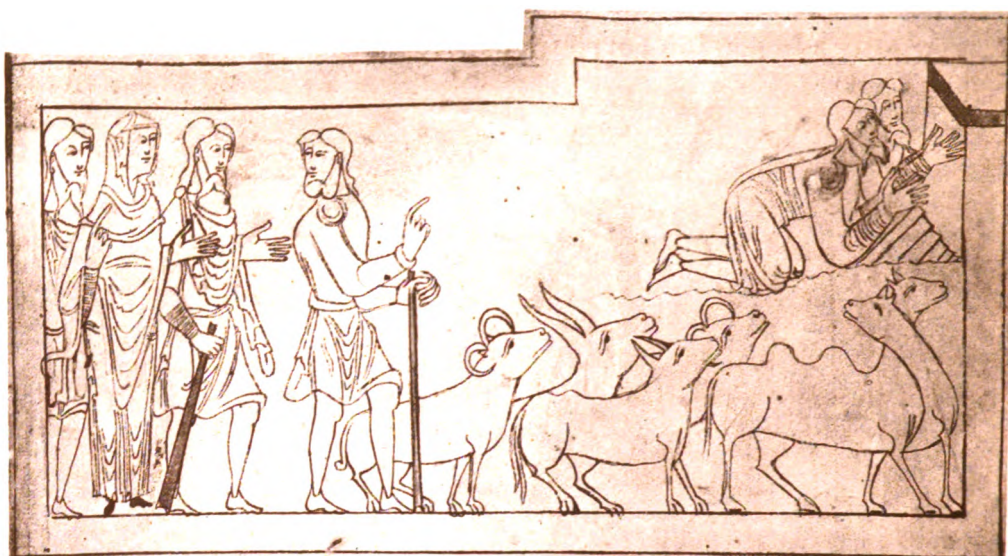
















## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

the style of the border and has the same colouring. In general, foliage forms a conspicuous part of the large ornamental initial letters of southern Anglo-Saxon manuscripts, together with interlaced knots—a detail of ornament which, as well as the entwining just described, is doubtless due to the influence of the northern school.

To conclude this article, we will briefly describe a manuscript which is not an artistic work in the way that we may regard the volumes from which the preceding illustrations have been drawn, but which is of so much importance for the insight we obtain from it into the method of work of the Anglo-Saxon book-illustrator, that we may regard its survival as a most fortunate circumstance for the history of English art. It is one of the volumes of the Cottonian collection (Claudius B. iv.) and contains the Anglo-Saxon paraphrase of the Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua by Ælfric the Grammarian, written early in the eleventh century and illustrated with numerous coloured drawings. These drawings do not pretend to be artistic; indeed many of them are very rough, the object of the draughtsman being to illustrate the text, not to decorate the book. At the same time some of the series, which are chiefly in outline and only slightly tinted with colour, are not without merit. We give one of them in the upper part of Plate 8, representing the scene of the journey of Abraham with Lot and with their herds and flocks to Bethel, 'unto the place of the altar which he had made there' (Gen. xiii. 4). But the greater number of the drawings in the volume are painted with body-colour, and, as towards the end of the manuscript a large proportion of them are unfinished and have been left in different stages of progress,

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

we see exactly how the work was done. First the colours of the dresses were applied with the brush in patches, without any previous outline being drawn with the pen or pencil, so that a design which has been left in this initial stage has all the appearance of a set of variously coloured stencils laid haphazard across the page. It is, however, quite evident that no mechanical means were employed for marking out the different shapes, but that the artist trusted entirely to his eye to guide his hand. The facility with which this part of his work was composed could only have been the result of considerable practice. Next, the heads, limbs, hands, details of dress, etc., were drawn in outline, the features were added; and the picture was then presumably complete. In the lower part of Plate 8 we have a section from one of these half-finished designs. It represents Moses, with an enormous pair of horns fitted to his head, dividing the promised land among the children of Israel. Here the dresses have been blocked in in body-colour in the way described, and the heads and limbs have been sketched in; the final touches, however, such as the indications of the features, have not been added. But this design, as well as one or two others in the book, is peculiar in having undergone a further treatment from a different hand. It will be seen that the folds of the coats or tunics of the two figures to the right and left of Moses, and the hands of one of them, are drawn in, above the other work, in the agitated style of Anglo-Saxon art. Whether it was intended thus to finish off the other designs in the manuscript cannot be determined; perhaps not. But, however that may be, this last addition is evidently the work of a skilful artist, who may have been merely exercising his hand on a few figures in an idle moment.

## II

### FROM THE TWELFTH TO THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY



THE changes wrought in England by the Norman Conquest, which at this distance of time appear to us in many respects so abrupt, are in no department more marked than in that of the production of manuscripts, whether in their character of writing or in their style of ornamentation. The abrupt suddenness of the change is perhaps more apparent than real. If we examine the English manuscripts of the eleventh century we find that the influence of the handwriting of the continent had already manifested itself on this side of the Channel long before the invasion of England was dreamt of; and there is no difficulty in believing that, even if that invasion had never taken place, the handwriting of English scribes would in course of time have gradually developed on the lines into which it was more hurriedly forced by the transfer of power to the Normans. That there was, however, a marked change wrought by the Conquest will not be disputed. The number of mss. of this period which have descended to us is quite large enough to satisfy us on this point. With regard to the ornamentation of manuscripts



## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

we have unfortunately only a scanty amount of material by which to form an opinion ; but judging from what remains, and following the analogy of the course of the handwriting, there can be little doubt that the change in style was here also very decided.

The change was an advantage and gain to English draughtsmanship. The grafting of the foreign style on the outline-drawing of the Anglo-Saxon school, which we have described in a former article, certainly lent to the latter a strength which checked the affectation towards which it was tending. Without this foreign infusion, the figures of the Anglo-Saxon draughtsman would probably have been subject to increasing exaggeration of their leading characteristics and have ended in being mere grotesques. On the other hand, the fine free-hand drawing, which actually resulted from the combination of the English and Norman schools, is a conspicuous feature in manuscripts ornamented in England during the next three centuries ; and we may trace the favour shown to this style of drawing in our country to the success with which outline-drawing had been so long practised under the Anglo-Saxon kings.

But, besides artistic draughtsmanship which had scope for its efforts in the paintings or miniatures of the manuscript, there is that other side of book-ornamentation which, all through the progress of the art in the Middle Ages, runs with it, generally subordinate, but sometimes even excelling the miniature-drawing, namely, the purely decorative side, as seen in the border and the initial letter. The skill required for this department was of a more mechanical nature than that which the miniature demanded ; and, although the fertile invention of

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

the decorator and his facile dexterity in execution are often marvellous, the draughtsman of the miniature was usually an artist of a higher order. At first the distinction is not so great, drawing and decoration would be executed by the same hand ; but in the later Middle Ages the two branches were quite separate and were cultivated by different classes of artists. We must not lose sight of this fact in estimating the character of the manuscripts which pass in review before us.

In the nature of things, illuminated manuscripts, which, like all other works of art, were scarcely to be produced but under peaceful conditions, could have been executed in no great numbers at a period when so many changes were in progress as after the Norman Conquest. That few should have been handed down to us from this time is no great wonder. It was probably only in the great monasteries that there existed the skill and means for their production ; and when we bear in mind the destruction and loss which attended the dispersion of the monastic libraries at the time of the suppression of the monasteries, we may deem it a happy accident that we possess even such few examples as exist.

We must begin our review some hundred years after the date of the Conquest, first taking in our hands two manuscripts of a typical character, the one coming from the old Anglo-Saxon capital and seat of art and literature, Winchester, the other from the later founded house of Westminster, where the new foreign influence more strongly prevailed.

The first of these two manuscripts is in the Cottonian collection of the British Museum, and bears the press-number, Nero C. iv. It contains

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

the Psalter, written in Latin and Norman-French in parallel columns, perhaps soon after the middle of the twelfth century. From entries in the accompanying calendar and a reference in one of the prayers, we ascertain that the place of its origin was the monastery of St. Swithun at Winchester, and that it became the property of the nuns of Shaftesbury Abbey in Dorsetshire not long after its completion. The part of the volume which now concerns us is a series of miniatures which precede the text and which illustrate the scheme of the Redemption, traced from the Fall of Man, through the Deluge, the Patriarchs, the life of Joseph, the giving of the Law, the life of David and of Christ, to the Last Judgment. These drawings are very remarkable in style, and the fact of our knowing the place where they were executed renders them particularly valuable as being specimens of the school which had formerly produced so many magnificent examples of Anglo-Saxon illumination. The contrast between them and such a series as that contained in the Benedictional of St. Æthelwold (see above, p. 22) is sufficiently marked in general character. The delicacy of the older drawings gives place to a bolder and stronger style; and yet in details we may trace affinities which show that the traditions of a hundred years of earlier date still influenced the artists of Winchester in the days of the early Plantagenets.

The miniature which has been selected for reproduction (Plate 9) on a reduced scale represents two scenes: David delivering the lamb from the lion's mouth; and Samuel anointing David. In the first, David tending his flock stands on the left, on the right he is seen rescuing the lamb; the repetition of the principal figure in different actions





## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

being, it is hardly necessary to remind the reader, not unusual in mediæval art. The tree which fills the background, with its curiously close-packed top of foliage and its wide-spreading branches, is not the least interesting feature in the scene, for in it (as also, to some extent, in the leafage of the border) we can recognise a connection with the luxuriant leaf-ornamentation of Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of the southern school. And, before dismissing the scene, we may note an instance of the survival of the memory of early classical models in the attitude of the two dancing kids. 'Ici escust David al liun un veille' is the Norman-French title. In the second scene David, the youngest (and therefore here represented as very decidedly the smallest) of the sons of Jesse, is anointed king by Samuel in the presence of his father and his brethren: 'Ici enunist Samuel li prophete David en rei par ly cumant Deu.'

The most distinctive characteristic of the drawing of this series of illustrations lies in the treatment of the drapery, which clings to the limbs and indicates their outlines in a very forcible manner. This peculiarity is to some degree observable in the mss. of the Anglo-Saxon period, as, for instance, in the Benedictional of St. Æthelwold, and may perhaps be a special mark of the style of the Winchester school of the twelfth century, for we find it again in the drawings in the great Bible of that time, still preserved in the Chapter Library of Winchester (see *Facsimiles* of the Palæographical Society, Series II., Plates 166, 167). Another survival of the older school is found in the liberal application of gilding. In the page before us, the narrow frame on which the titles are inscribed, the borders of some of the robes and the personal

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

ornaments, David's crook (in the upper scene), Samuel's horn, and details of the foliage of the tree are gilt with dull gold, and the same profusion is found in other miniatures of the series. The colours are chiefly different shades of red and green, for the most part lightly washed in. The background was originally painted light blue, but the colour has almost entirely discharged.

The drawing of all the miniatures of the series is not of equal merit; and that which has been selected is one of the best. But, taken as a whole, they afford very remarkable material for the study of that side of English art of the period in which the sentiment of the Anglo-Saxon school was still a not unimportant element. There are, however, among them two paintings which may for a moment engage our attention. They are not English in character; and their presence is not one of the least interesting points in connection with this volume. They are entirely Italian in drawing and in colouring; but how they came to be included in the series we shall never know. They are not mere haphazard insertions; but, as appears from their setting and the Norman-French titles written as in the English drawings of the series, they were executed expressly for the book. Who could have been the artist? Was he an Englishman who had dwelt in Italy and had been trained as an artist in the Italian school? Or are they the work of some Italian monk or traveller who made return for the hospitality of the house of St. Swithun by leaving behind him these testimonies of his artistic skill? Who shall decide? The one drawing represents the Death of the Virgin, the other her Enthronement; and both are remarkable for the excellence and bold character of their execution. When we

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

bear in mind how few examples of painting of this description are to be found in Italian manuscripts of the period of the twelfth century, we can scarcely rate too high the value of our two miniatures for the history of Italian book-decoration. Even if they should be the work of an English artist who had studied in Italy, their witness to the high standard of the miniaturist's art in that country, which we might otherwise scarcely suspect, is equally good.

While we might expect to find, at such a centre of Anglo-Saxon art as Winchester had been, the influence of the older style still prevailing, as in the case of the manuscript which we have just been considering, the decided change in illumination to which we have referred above as the result of the Norman Conquest is manifest in examples produced in places where contact with foreign art was more frequent. Thus, as early as the twelfth century, we already experience, in not a few instances, a difficulty in discriminating between manuscripts ornamented in England and those produced in Northern France or the Netherlands; and every one who has studied the subject knows how this difficulty increases as we proceed through the next century and a half. It is frequently by small indications alone that we can fix the nationality; and these indications are not always marked enough to allow us to judge decisively. This, however, is not to be wondered at, if we bear in mind the close connection of England with the neighbouring countries of the continent at this time, and the continual influx of foreign artists.

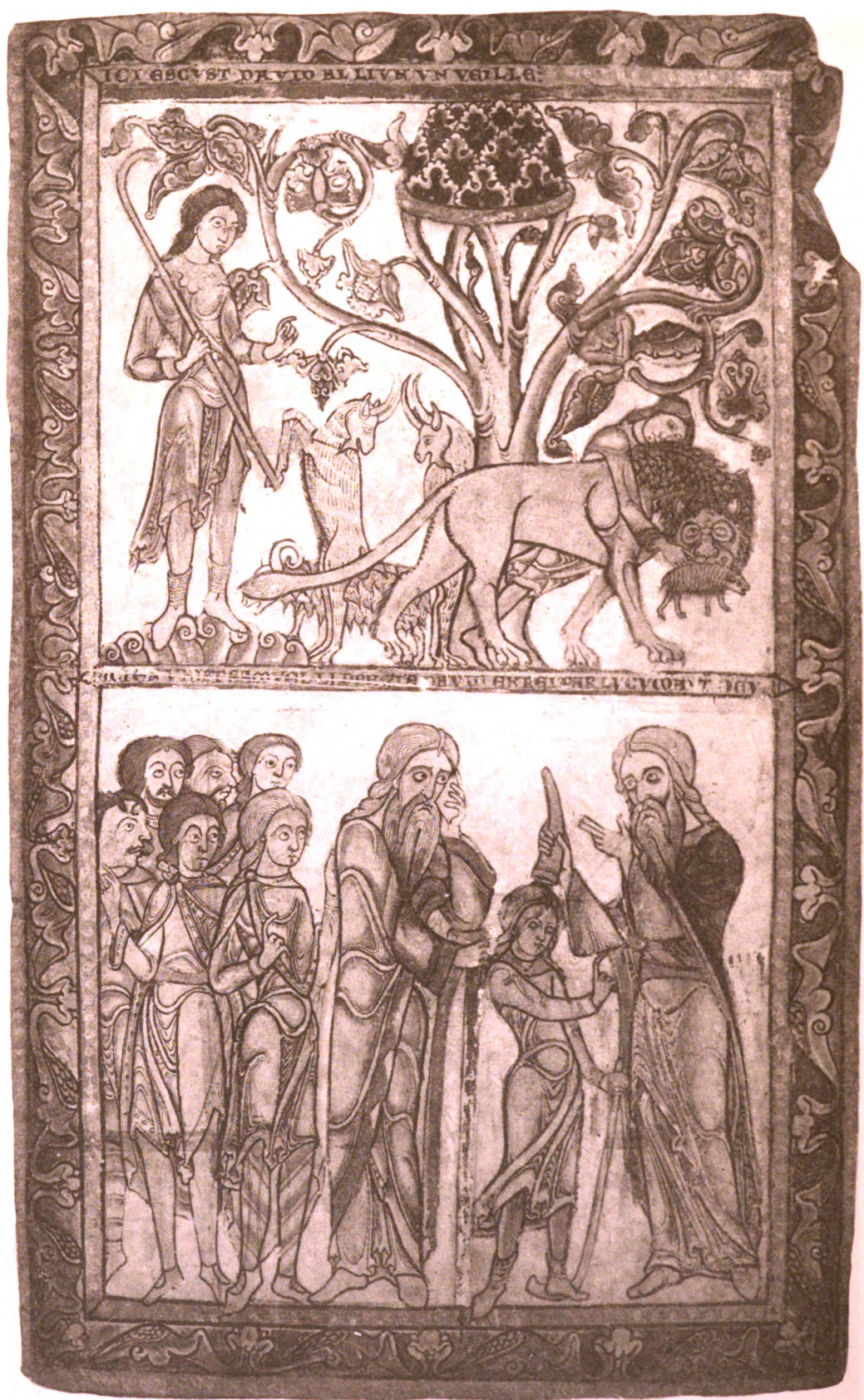
We take our next example from an English manuscript of the twelfth century, which has cast off almost all traces of the older Anglo-Saxon



## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

school, and which will bear comparison with Norman work of the period. The manuscript is a very beautiful Psalter in the Old Royal collection in the British Museum, numbered 2 A. xxii. The writing is distinctively English, of that charming type which places the twelfth-century manuscripts of England in the very front rank of calligraphy; and the prominence given in the calendar and prayers to St. Peter and to St. Edward the Confessor would be quite sufficient to show that the volume originated at Westminster, even without its identification by an entry in the inventory of the abbey. It is of the period of the later years of Henry the Second's reign. As is usual with Psalters of this period it has a series of miniatures preceding the text. One of these is here given (Plate 10) representing the Psalmist playing on the harp. He is clad in three garments: an under-robe of white shaded with blue, which is seen on the forearm and covering the ankles; an upper-robe of pale violet, with a gilt jewelled border at the top and round the open sleeve, and with an orange border round the bottom; and a cloak of pale brown madder lined with ermine and having a gilt jewelled border at the bottom. His shoes are open down the front and disclose stockings of orange; the footstool is chocolate dappled with white. The harp is of straw-yellow. The throne is constructed of various materials, indicated by slate-blue, green, orange, and white; the cushion is orange. The back of the throne is deep ultramarine, the use of which becomes so prevalent in France in the next century and often determines the nationality of the manuscripts of that country. The background of the niche in which the throne is set is of burnished gold (a material of ornament















## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

which now begins to make its appearance) which, however, has flaked off in part; and the cornice is of white, shaded with pale green, the brick-work of the two corners being slate-blue. The features are pallid, and are worked up with white, applied in a thick pigment; the hair is brown. This treatment of the features we are inclined to accept as a mark of English work; and it is very observable in the illumination of manuscripts of this country at a later time. We should also point to the peculiar salmon pink colour of the outer border, worked with a leaf-design in white, as an indication of English origin; and also in particular to the thin line of green with which this border is edged. Green-edging is very prevalent in English illumination of this period.

The drawing of this miniature is in the broad style characteristic of its period; and the same breadth of treatment is to be observed in the details of merely decorative designs, as initial letters and borders. In the larger manuscripts of the twelfth century we find numerous examples of initials of unusually grand dimensions, formed of interlacing and twining patterns, in which foliage on a bold scale occupies a prominent part, while animals of various kinds play among the branches. As the century advances these large initials become more refined in their details, preparing us for the delicately minute work of the next century.

The contrast, indeed, between the broad style of the twelfth century and the minute style of the thirteenth century is so striking that we are apt to think the change more sudden than perhaps it really was. It is true, however, that the period of transition was not very extended, and the rapid and general disuse of large volumes and the



## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

adoption of a smaller scale, particularly for the multitudes of Bibles which were produced in the thirteenth century, affected the art of illumination in a remarkable degree. It is from the period of the latter part of the twelfth century that we have a steady and continuous development of the initial, the border, and the miniature connected with the initial and border, running through the next three centuries. All that had been done in book-decoration previously to this time belongs to what we may call the older school. Illumination now takes a new departure; and the reign of brilliant colouring and highly burnished gold commences. In fact, the term illumination is now appropriately applied in reference to the highly decorative art which is henceforth practised through the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries.

Plate II represents a page of a Latin Bible of about the middle of the thirteenth century, now the Royal ms. I. D. 1 in the British Museum. The scribe has given his name, Willelmus Devoniensis; but there is no indication how or whence the volume passed into the Royal Library. It is a very beautiful manuscript, written on fine vellum in a perfect style of penmanship, and decorated with miniatures and numerous initials, all executed with great skill in rich colours and burnished gold. The large initial P of the plate has a stem composed of three bands of gold, blue, and lake respectively, relieved with patterns in white; and the bow of the letter is filled with diapered work on a ground of lake. The Apostle Paul wears an under-robe of vermillion and an upper-robe of blue lined with green. The sheath of his sword, which is placed across his shoulder, hilt upwards, is of gold; and he holds



nomina sunt in libro uite. Gaudete  
in domino semper. iterum dico gaude  
te. Ecclesia uia nota sit omib; hōib;  
dominus prope ē. Nichil solliciti sitis  
s; in omni orōne et obsecratōne cum  
grārum accione petitiōes uestrae inno  
tescant apud deum. Et pax dei quae ex  
superat omnem sensum custodiat corda  
uestra et intelligētias uestras in xpo iesu  
domino nro. Ad cetero frēs quicum;  
sunt uera. q̄cum; pudica. quetum;  
iusta. q̄cum; scā. q̄cum; amabilia.  
quetum; bone fame si qua uirtus  
si qua laus discipline. hec cogitate  
que didicistis et accepistis et audistis  
et uidistis in me. hec agite et deus pa  
cis erit uobiscum. Gaudius sum autē  
in domino uehementer quoniam tandem a  
liquōto reflexistis pro me sentite si ē  
et sentebatis. occupati autē eratis nō quia  
propter penuriam dico. ego enim didici  
in quibus sum sufficiens ēē scio et hu  
miliari scio et hūndare. et in  
omnib; institutus sum et facere et  
et surire. hūndare et penuriam pati.  
Omnia possum in eo qui me confortat.  
et in p̄m bñfecistis cōmunicātes  
triblōm mee. scitis autē et uos philip  
pensēs quia in principio euāgelii quā p  
fectus sum a macedonia nulla in ec  
clesia cōmunicauit in rōne dati et  
accepti nisi uos soli. quia et thesaloni  
cam semel et bis in usum in misisti  
nō quia queto datum. s; requiro fruc  
tum hūntantem in orōnem uestram.  
hōes autē omnia et hūnto. repletus sū  
acceptis ab epafrodito que misistis  
in odorē suauitatis hostiam ac  
ceptam placentem deo. Deus autē  
nris impleat omne desiderium uestrum  
secundō diuitias suas in glā in xpo  
iesu. Deo autē et p̄m nro gloria in scā  
seculorum amē. salutem omne scōm  
in xpo iesu. salutem uos qui mecum  
sunt frēs. salutem uos omnes scō  
maxime autē qui de cesaris domo sē.  
Gratia domini nri iesu xpi cum spi  
ritu uro amen.

**E**phesenses et hii sicut la  
colicenses sunt asiani  
et ipsi preuenti erant a  
pseudo ap̄lis. nec ad hō  
accessit ip̄e ap̄lis. sed et  
hos per eplam corrigit. audierunt e  
nim uerbum ab archippo. qui et m̄ste  
rium in eos accepit. Ergo ap̄lis scri  
bit eis iam ligatus ab epheso p̄tici  
cum diacone. et acortum onesimū.  
epla pauli ad colossenses.

**P**aulus ap̄lis et iesu  
per uoluntatem  
dei et timodis fr̄  
hūis qui sunt co  
lois scōis et fideli  
bus fr̄ib; in xpo iesu  
grā uobis et pax a  
deo p̄re nro et domino iesu xpo. et  
grās agimus deo et p̄m domini  
nri iesu xpi semper pro uobis orā  
tes audientes fidem uestram in xpo  
iesu. et dilectiōem quā habetis in oīs  
scōis propter spem que reposita est  
uobis in celis. quā audistis in  
uero ueritate euāgelii quod perue  
nit ad uos sicut et in uniuerso  
mundo ē. et fructificat et crescit si  
cut in uobis. ex ea quā audistis  
die et cognouistis grām dei in  
uirtute sicut didicistis ab epa  
stia k̄mo conseruio nro qui est fi  
delis pro uobis minister xpi iesu qui  
et iam manifestauit nobis dilectio  
nem uestram in spiritu. Ideo et nos ex  
qua die audiuimus nō cessauimus  
pro uobis orantes et postulantes ut  
impleamini agnitiōe uoluntatis ei  
in omni sapia et intellectu sp̄uali.  
ut ambuletis digne deo per omnia  
placantes in omni opere bono fruc  
tificantes et crescentes in scia dei in  
omni uirtute confortati secundō po  
tētiā claritatis eius. in omni po  
tētiā et longanimitate. cum gaudi  
o grās agentes deo et p̄m qui dignos  
nos fecit in partem sortis scōrum in  
lumine qui eripuit nos de pōtate  
tenebrarū et trāstulit in regnum filii  
dilectionis sue in quo habemus redēp







## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

unfolded the scroll of his Epistle to the Colossians. Green, blue, red, lake, and gold are employed in the finials of the letter ; and also compose the initial C of the prologue and its pendant.

In the large initial we have an example of the combination of the miniature with the initial and partial border, a combination which is typical of book-decoration of the thirteenth century. In manuscripts of earlier periods the miniature was a painting which usually occupied a page independently of the text, as, for example, in the psalters which have provided the two plates which have just been presented to the reader ; or, if inserted in the text, it was not connected with the decoration of the page. It was in fact an illustration and nothing more. But now, while the miniature is still employed in this manner independently of the text, the miniature-initial also comes into common use, the miniature therein, however, continuing to hold for some time a subordinate place as a decorative rather than as an illustrative feature. In course of time, with the growth of the border, the twofold function of the miniature as a means of illustration and also of decoration is satisfied by allowing it to occupy part or even the whole of a page as an independent picture, but at the same time set in the border which has developed from the pendant of the initial. This development of the border it is extremely interesting to follow ; and so regular is its growth, and so marked are the national characteristics which it assumes, that the period and place of origin of an illuminated manuscript may often be accurately determined from the details of its borders alone.

In the plate before us we see that the pendants or finials of the initials are simple in style and

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

restricted in extent, and that they terminate in simple buds or cusps. In the next stage, characteristic generally of the fourteenth century, the pendants put out branches, and the buds grow into leaves; and thus, gradually extending, the border finally surrounds the entire page.

We have already referred to the difficulty which is often experienced of pronouncing decisively on the nationality of illuminations of this time produced in England and the neighbouring continental countries. With respect to the particular manuscript which we are considering, and having regard to the decoration alone, the general style closely follows the methods of the school of Northern France; but we should adjudge the volume to England, chiefly on account of the large employment of lake, a favourite colour with English artists of this time, and partly on account of the quality of the gold. That metal, it has been observed, as used in French manuscripts, rather inclines towards a copper tint, which is never discernible in the illuminations of this country.

The drawing of the little figures and details in the initials of the thirteenth century is, in general, remarkably fine and clean. The features of the human face are indicated by very light pen-lines alone without any attempt at modelling. Consequently there is a certain meagreness of aspect and tendency to over-refinement; which, however, is perfectly in keeping with the minute character of the decoration generally. Though we may not rate illuminations of this style and period as artistic productions so highly as those which succeeded them, yet the effect which they produce is always pleasing, and we never cease to admire the invention and ingenuity which the thirteenth century artist





**I**uorem os maledictione et amaritudine  
plenum est: ueloces pedes eorum ad effundendum  
sanguinem.

**C**ontentio et infelicitas in uis eorum: et uitam  
pacis non cognouerunt. non est timor dei an  
te oculos eorum.

**N**onne cognoscent omnes qui operantur in  
iquitatem: qui detorant plebem meam si  
cut escam panis.

**N**on erubescunt non mutauerunt illi trepidant  
tunc timore: ubi non erat timor.

**Q**uoniam dominus in generatione iusta est  
consilium inopis confiditis: quoniam domi  
nus spes eius est.

**F**uit dabit ex syon salutatem israel: cum auer  
terit dominus captiuitatem plebis sue exulta  
bit iacob et letabitur israel.

**O**mnis qui habitabit in tabernaculo  
tuo: aut quis requiescet in monte sancto tuo.  
qui ingreditur sine macula: et operatur iusticiam.  
qui loquitur ueritatem in corde suo: qui non  
regit dolum in lingua sua.

**E**t fecit proximo suo malum: et obprobrium  
non accepit aduersus proximos suos.







## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

displays in filling to the best advantage the circumscribed spaces which the fashion of the day left at his disposal in the texts and margins of manuscripts.

As the century proceeds we are sensible of an expansion in style. As the handwriting gradually relaxes its severe stiff character and assumes a certain roundness and pliancy in its strokes, so the rather rigid drawing of the middle of the century begins to bend into those more yielding lines which are typical of the art of the fourteenth century. Our next example is selected, as an instance of highly-finished decoration of the later half of the thirteenth century, from the Additional ms. 24686 in the British Museum, known as the Tenison Psalter, from its having once formed part of the library of Archbishop Tenison. This Psalter is one of the most beautiful illuminated English manuscripts of its time, but unfortunately only in part, for it was not finished in the perfect style in which it was begun. The whole book is illuminated, but in the first quire of the text the ornamentation is of peculiar beauty and differs in style from that of the rest of the volume. It appears, from the evidence of coats of arms and other indications, to have been undertaken as a royal gift on the intended marriage of Alphonso, son of King Edward the First, with a daughter of Florent, Count of Holland, which, however, was never accomplished owing to the young prince's death in the year 1284. The book was afterwards finished in an inferior style, and was probably given to the princess Elizabeth, fourth daughter of Edward the First, who was married successively to John, Count of Holland, and to Humphrey de Bohun, Earl of Hereford and Constable of England.

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

In Plate 12 is produced one of the pages of the quire ornamented for Alphonso; and the progress of the art, when compared with that of William of Devon's Bible, is at once manifest. There is more freedom in the drawing, the stiffness of the earlier examples is in great measure overcome; and the pendant has thrown out a branch which has already put forth leaves. A great variety of colours, blue, rose, vermillion, lake, green, brown, as well as burnished gold, is employed in the composition of the large initial and its accompanying pendant and border; and the small initials are of gold laid on a ground of blue or lake, and filled with lake or blue; while the ribbons which fill up the spaces at the ends of the verses are alternately of the same colours and are decorated with patterns in silver on the blue and in gold on the lake.

The group of the dismounted knight despatching a gryphon, which has proved too much for the horse, upon whose dying body the expectant raven has already perched, is tinted in lighter colours. It is an instance of the use to which marginal space was frequently put, particularly by English artists, for the introduction of little scenes, such as episodes in romances or stories, games, grotesque combats, social scenes, etc., often drawn with a light free hand and most artistic touch. Without these little sketches, much of the manners and customs, dress, and daily life of our ancestors would have remained for ever unknown to us.

In connection with this free style of drawing just referred to, we must for a moment turn from the subject of illumination to cast an eye upon its employment for the main illustration in manuscripts of a character not necessarily needing the













## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

artistic treatment of such choice books as the Bibles and Psalters which form the bulk of illuminated manuscripts of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the Winchester Psalter described above we had examples of the bold style which was the result of Norman influence upon the native school of drawing of that place. From the dearth of material we cannot unfortunately follow the course of its development; but that free outline-drawing was cultivated as a means of illustration of historical books, whether sacred or profane, is quite certain, as is proved by such examples as we have. One of the monasteries best known to us for the production of its manuscripts was St. Albans Abbey; and the man who, above all others, is famous for his work there, both as a writer and as an artist, was the monk, Matthew Paris. Some have doubted whether all the manuscripts which have been ascribed to him could have been the work of one pair of hands, and whether they should not be pronounced to be the productions of a school rather than of an individual. Be that as it may, the fact remains that we have a number of volumes written in one style, if not by one hand, and, accompanying several of them, very well-executed drawings of an illustrative character.

Plate 13 is taken from a scene in Matthew Paris's *Life of Offa*, in the Cottonian ms. Nero D. i. The drawing represents a scene from the Life of Offa, king of Mercia, the founder of St. Albans Abbey. The son of Wærmund, king of the Angles, he was born blind and dumb, and, although at the age of seven he received his sight, he still remained a mute. On the left margin, the child Offa kneels in prayer before the altar within

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

a church: 'Offa orans et oblatus Deo'; his afflictions being told in two hexameter lines:

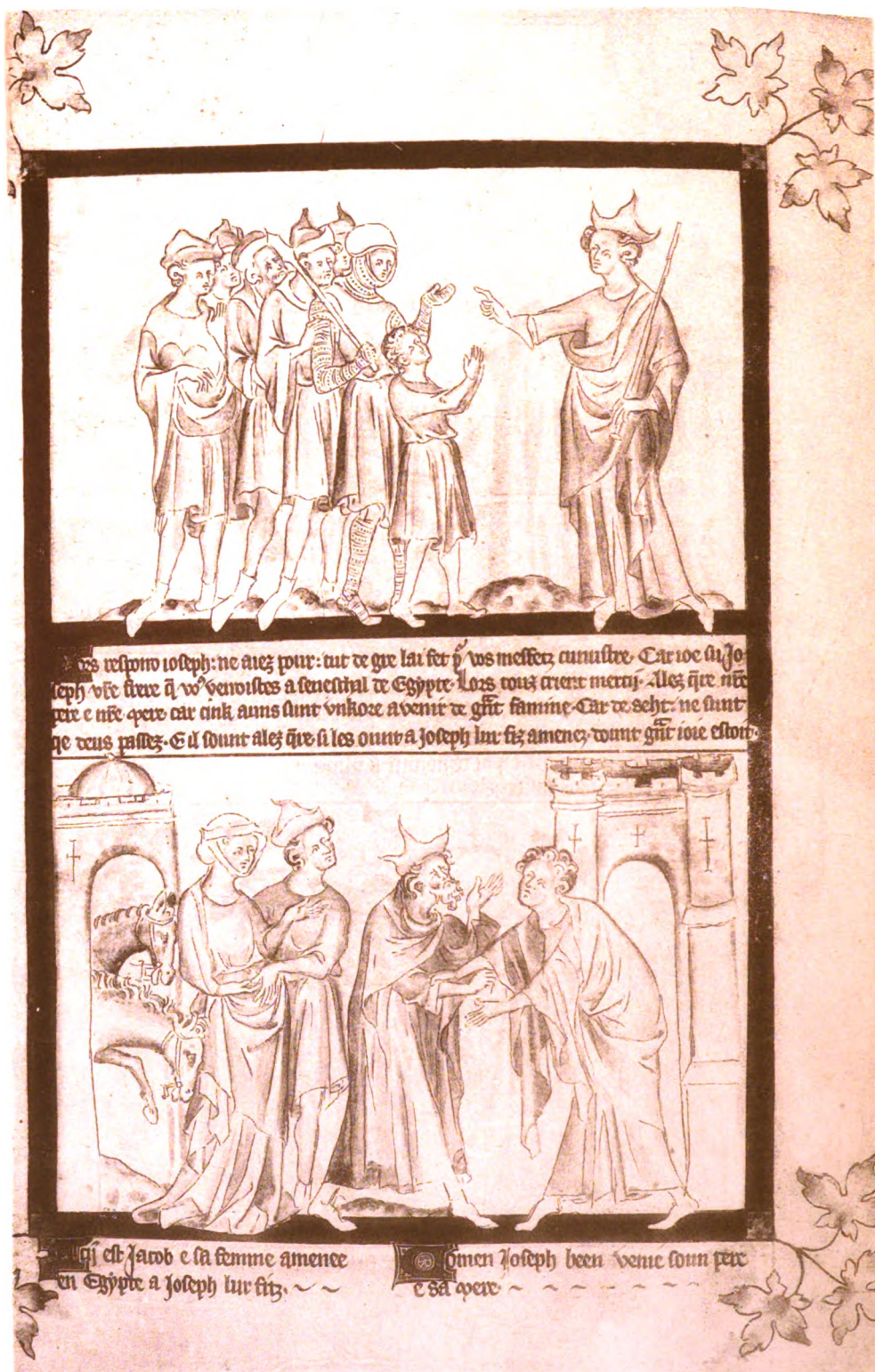
'Ve, ve, quo fato regali stem[m]ate nato,'  
Os michi mutescit, oculorum lumen ebescit.'

At the age of thirty he was still incapable of speech, and the king was growing old; and the people were uneasy at the prospect of a dumb man sitting on the throne. This was the opportunity of the traitor Rigan, one of the nobles, who put forward a claim to the throne and gathered his followers. In a truce that was arranged a great council was held for many days, and on the last day Offa was present; and in his grief his heart was so moved that his tongue was loosed and he spake boldly before the wise men. Here King 'Warmundus' sits in state upon his throne; before him Offa, by the grace of God, Whose protecting arm is outstretched from heaven, stands 'sanus et elegans effectus,' while three of the king's nobles, 'proceres,' offer up praises to God for the miracle. Rigan, 'qui et Aliel dicebatur,' turns away as he defies the king and his son, with the words, 'Te, rex delire, cum filio diffiducio,' in company with an evil-faced follower, a 'suggestor malorum.'

After making due allowance for imperfect knowledge of perspective and faults in proportion, which are common to the time and not characteristic of the individual, no one can fail to admire the boldness of the outlines and the artistic treatment of the drapery; nor can it be denied that the draughtsman, whether Matthew Paris himself or some other worker in the scriptorium of St. Albans, was a capable and skilful illustrator.

— We now take leave of the thirteenth century and enter on the period when the art of book-









## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

decoration in England reached its highest standard of excellence. And we commence our review of the work of that period with the very finest manuscript of its kind, probably unique in its combination of excellence of drawing, brilliance of illumination, and extent and variety of subjects.

The Royal ms. 2 B. vii., commonly known as 'Queen Mary's Psalter,' is a thick volume of 320 leaves, of large octavo size, which, as we learn from a note on the last leaf, was on the point of being carried beyond seas when the '*spectatus et honestus vir*,' Baldwin Smith, a customs officer in the port of London, wisely laid hands on it and presented it to the Queen in October 1553. It is bound in crimson velvet worked on each cover with a large pomegranate,—the Queen's badge, which had been that of her Spanish mother,—but now much worn; and it has gilt corner plates, and clasp fittings (the clasps themselves no longer exist) engraved respectively with the lion, the dragon, the portcullis, and the fleur-de-lis of the Tudor royal house.

The manuscript is of the beginning of the fourteenth century, executed in the best style of English art of that time. The first fifty-six leaves are occupied by a series of most exquisite miniature drawings, illustrating Bible history from the Creation down to the death of Solomon, and generally arranged two on a page. Each drawing is accompanied with a description in French, sometimes in rhyming verse; and it is to be observed that the narrative is not always strictly confined to the Bible account, but occasionally embodies apocryphal details. Nothing can be more charming than the delicate execution of these drawings, lightly sketched with a perfect touch and exact precision, and very slightly tinted with colours,



## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

violet, green, and brown. Our Plate 14 gives us the two scenes of Joseph making himself known to his brethren, and receiving his father and mother on their arrival in Egypt; but the artist has forgotten that Rachel had died long before. The descriptive titles are as follows:—

‘Lors respond ioseph : ne aiez pour : tut de gre lai fet pur vos mesfetz cunustre. Car ioe su Ioseph vostre frere qe vous vendistes a seneschal de Egypte. Lors touz crient mercij. Alez qere nostre pere et nostre mere, car cink auns sunt unkore a venir de grant famine. Car de seht (*i.e.* sept) ne sunt qe deus passez. E il sount alez qere. si les ount a Ioseph lur fiz amenez. dount grant ioie estoit.’

‘Icij est Iacob e sa femme amenee en Egypte a Ioseph lur fitz. Comen Ioseph been venie soun pere e sa mere.’

The frame, as in the rest of the series, is composed of simple bands of vermillion, with green quatre-foils at the corners, from each of which springs a stem with three leaves lightly touched with green or violet.

The elegant outline of the figures and the easy flow of the lines of the drapery could have been attained only after long practice by a skilful hand; and we should specially notice, as characteristic of the time, the peculiar sway given to the human figure, which, though perhaps rather affected, is not an unpleasing attitude.

The next division of the manuscript contains the Psalter, with Litany, etc., ornamented with a profusion of miniatures of various scenes from the Life of Christ, followed by a series of the Resurrection and Last Judgment, and figures of the saints and martyrs, besides initials and miniature-initials and borders, all illuminated in the very first style with brilliant colours and burnished gold. The drawing of these miniatures is also of the highest





yrieleyson  
 xpeleyson  
 yrieleyson.  
 xpe audinos.









## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

excellence; and the general character of the sumptuously decorated pages of this part of the volume may be seen from the coloured Plate 15, which may be pronounced a successful reproduction. It represents the Last Judgment, standing at the commencement of the Litany. In it we have the full miniature within a border, the miniature-initial with its pendants, and the commencement of the text with its own ornament. But, in addition to these highly illuminated miniatures, this portion of the volume has in the lower margins a series of tinted drawings executed in the style of the series of Bible illustrations which occupy the first part. The subjects of these drawings are of a most varied character. Hunting scenes, pictures of animal life, escapades of Reynard the Fox, illustrations of popular stories, dancing groups, tilting scenes, combats of grotesque creatures, sports and pastimes, follow one another in endless variety, and are succeeded by miracles of the Virgin and scenes from the lives and passions of the saints. In the drawing at the foot of the plate, Saul is receiving the letters to Damascus for the persecution of the saints. The possession of such a masterpiece as Queen Mary's Psalter gives us cause to regret that the modesty of the illuminators of the Middle Ages forbade them to append their names to their works.

### III

#### FOURTEENTH AND FIFTEENTH CENTURIES



period of the history of illumination in England is of greater importance than the first half of the fourteenth century upon which we entered at the close of the last article. In those fifty years the art culminated, and the finest work was the production of that time.

It is now that the drawing becomes free and casts off the rigidity of the earlier period; there is more action and movement in the figures; and the decoration, though it has lost much of the refinement and exactness of the thirteenth century, has greater play and more invention in details. Compared with productions of the same class in the neighbouring continental countries, English work of this time appears, in our judgment, to have the advantage not only in elegance of drawing, but also in delicacy of colouring.

But before proceeding with the detailed description of examples which are to illustrate the present article, we may briefly trace the growth of the decoration, as distinguished from the subject-drawing, of the fourteenth century and follow its course into the fifteenth, when purely English illumination died out. In this we shall have to consider the

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

decoration of the miniature (by which term we here mean the actual picture, without accessories, such as the border in which it is framed), and the decoration of the initial and border. Decoration could, of course, enter into, and form a part of, a miniature only in the times when the miniature was still regarded rather as an ornament for the book than as a work of art in itself, and before the knowledge of perspective and a proper understanding of landscape-painting raised it to the important artistic position which it attained in the second half of the fifteenth century. Such decoration naturally invaded and occupied the background, and in that position it played a very important part in the general effect. And it will be understood that what is here said of the miniature or independent picture also applies to the miniature which so often occupies the body of the initial letter.

In the coloured facsimile, Plate 15, which accompanied the preceding article we have examples of different styles followed by the illuminators of the early fourteenth century in dealing with the decoration of the miniature. In the upper compartment the background is of burnished gold pounced or punctured with a hard point; that of the lower compartment is filled with diaper-work; and the initial is treated with a combination of the two styles, the interior of the R being gilt, while the square upon which it is laid, as on a background, is diapered. Gilding and diapering form the chief methods of ornamentation in such positions in the fourteenth century, subject, however, to certain modifications. The gold is always brilliant, and is generally pounced in various patterns, sometimes very elaborately. It must, however, be understood that such ornamented gild-



## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

ing is not confined to the period which we are discussing, for it extends back into the thirteenth century and continues in fashion even into the fifteenth century. Nor are we claiming the diaper for this time alone, for we have already seen it in full development in the thirteenth century, and it continues in use to a much later time. We are here only laying stress on the common employment of these two kinds of ornamentation either side by side or alternatively in manuscripts of the fourteenth century. With regard to the patterns of the diaper-work, there seems to have been no end to the invention which was exercised in elaborating new designs; and, of course, geometrical lines lend themselves to an interminable variety of combinations. No doubt the illuminators were conscious of the necessity of putting forth their strength on so conspicuous a feature as the background, and of introducing a full variety of patterns in order to guard against the danger of monotony. The best proof of their success is that we never tire of examining their work.

Gilding and diapering gradually gave way before the growth of the landscape; but we wonder at the slowness of that growth. We have seen the conventional trees and rough mounds which did duty for landscape scenery in the English manuscripts before the Norman Conquest. There was no advance on this primitive style in the succeeding centuries. In the thirteenth century a conventional tree or hillock is still considered enough to represent natural scenery; in the fourteenth century very little more progress is made, and the gilt or diapered background still fills the space which should be occupied by the distant view and the sky. It is not until the fifteenth century that the

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

landscape really makes progress; but our native English manuscripts fail us at this period, and we have to go to French and Flemish and Italian illuminations to learn the last stages of the struggle between the ornamental background and the landscape. Early in the century we may certainly find a picture of natural scenery only, without any conventional background; but more frequently the diaper or conventional background still holds some part of the field. And, in those instances where the landscape prevails, the drawing remains without perspective, and the artist crowds the scene with unproportioned details in his attempt to represent the distant view. It was only when the horizon was found, after the middle of the century, that the conventional background entirely disappeared. When the artist had once discovered the power of rendering nature in true perspective, the need for such adventitious aids as a gilt or diapered background no longer existed; the incongruity of applying such decoration became self-evident; and the miniature, emancipated from decoration, was treated in the hands of the skilled painters of the late fifteenth century as an artistic work.

No doubt this development of the miniature was also in some degree due to the expansion of literature, which gave a wider field for the exercise of the miniaturist's art. He was not now confined to religious service books, as he had been almost exclusively in the earlier centuries. Romances, translations from Greek and Latin authors, and original works of general literature, now came into vogue and invited a style of illustration altogether different from that which had been followed in manuscripts of a religious or liturgical character.

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

Thus, while the latter still demanded their share of attention and while the artist had still to satisfy the fashionable demand for sumptuous Books of Hours and others of a like nature, he could now give more rein to his imagination in the production of miniatures suitable for the new secular literature; and this liberty no doubt reacted in some degree on the conventional ideas which the practice of so many centuries had connected with the illumination of sacred works. Had the latter continued to form the only vehicles for the expression of the miniaturist's art, it is not improbable that the decorative side of his work would have still held its ground to the exclusion of landscape other than conventional. We may find an analogy to this in our modern feeling with regard to the stained-glass windows of our churches. The dim, religious light of our places of worship is not suited to our dwelling-houses and public buildings; and accordingly the designs on stained glass are almost always required for sacred purposes. Hence convention has been established, and will probably be maintained as long as Gothic architecture holds sway; and the artist reverts to mediæval examples for his inspiration. So rooted has this idea of reversion to the designs of the Middle Ages become, not only for the treatment of figures, but also for details of ornament and for accessories, that the introduction of a modern style in a church window offends the senses as being totally inappropriate even in a modern building.

The forms of decoration of the miniature which have just been described are not confined to England, but are common to the countries of North-Western Europe. The gilt background and the diaper are found in manuscripts of France and

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

Flanders, very similar in style to those of this country; differences in colouring and treatment, however, affording criteria for distinguishing the nationality of the several examples. In the decoration of the ornamental initial and border the divergence is far greater; and, in course of time, a style is developed which is peculiarly English. While in France there developed the lightly-sprinkled ivy-leaf border, which is one of the distinguishing marks of the early fifteenth century manuscripts of that country; and while the artists of the Low Countries, first following the same lines, afterwards gradually introduced natural objects, fruits, flowers, insects, etc., and in the end produced those richly-worked frame-borders which are so distinctive of Flemish book-decoration; in England there is a strange development from the conventional three-pointed leaf and simple buds into leaves and flowers which more resemble feathery scrolls than any growth in nature.

It will be remembered that the border takes its rise from the pendant of the initial; and so strongly had this principle of growth, if it may so be termed, been impressed on the mind of the mediæval artist, that we see the connection between the border and the parent initial still kept up even when the original small pendant had developed into a border surrounding the entire page, and when the artistic balance between the two members of decoration is overthrown. We have seen the pendant of the thirteenth century terminating in a bud, which, in the pendant of the fourteenth century, has burst into a leaf. After this the development of the border quickly receives a great impetus. In the case of ordinary initials, which are only minor decorations for ordinary pages, the pendant, it is

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

true, never grows to any very extended length, and usually envelopes at most only a portion of the text, forming what is termed a partial border; but, wherever the artist desired to produce a handsomely-ornamented page, he carried the branches of the pendant entirely round the text, so as to form a complete frame for it; and, still further, as a common mode of writing the text was the arrangement of double columns, a separate branch was also carried between them. The full-grown border was, moreover, not infrequently further enlarged, in pages which the artist specially desired to signalise as of importance, in a form which altogether disguises the origin from the pendant. The slender branches are widened into a broad, solid frame, the several parts of which are internally divided into sections variously ornamented, or are filled with other designs; and yet the recollection of the origin of the frame is not lost, for shoots and sprays bearing conventional leaves and flowers are applied to its edges by way of further decoration. Nor, even in this artificial stage of development of the branching border, is the connection between it and the parent initial always severed, for we still find many instances of the solid frame issuing from the extremities of the large ornamental letter, just as the primitive pendant sprang from the same points in the initial of earlier date. The solid frame-border had already developed as early as the first half of the fourteenth century, and became more conventional and artificial as time proceeded.

The more general form of border, however, is of simpler construction. Following in this respect the analogy of a natural growth, the extremities of the initial from whence the branches, or, to give them a better name, the stems are to issue are pro-











## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

vided with a clustering mass of conventional foliage or a broad expanding blade or some such basis out of which the stems spring ; and as they grow along the margin the latter throw out leaves and flowers, and are more or less embellished with backgrounds of colours and gold. When the top and bottom of the page is reached, and the border has to be carried along the upper and lower margins, a new starting-point is created by forming an ornamental corner-piece, as for example by interlacings and foliage, from whence a new stem springs, and the process is repeated at each point where a turn is made. From the conditions of space, the stems have little room to imitate nature in pliant movements, and soon fall into the straight lines of the margins. Late in the fourteenth century they become rigid, and are almost invariably formed of two narrow bars welded together, the one in colours and the other gilt, which serve as a frame to support the sprays of foliage and flowers and other decorations of the border. And it is at the same period when the foliage and flowers take that distinctive feathery form which has been referred to above, and which can be better understood from the specimens given in the plates than from any verbal description.

Having now followed the general course of development of the decoration of English manuscripts in the period covered by this article, we proceed to give examples of the art both of the draughtsman and the illuminator from some of the best manuscripts of the British Museum.

The first is presented as a pleasing specimen of the outline drawing of the first half of the fourteenth century ; not so refined as the art of Queen Mary's Psalter, but still of a high order. It is selected

#### ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

from the Royal ms. 19 B. xv. This beautiful manuscript contains a French version of the Apocalypse, with commentary, written in England in the cursive style of hand which was used for charters and legal documents, and may be dated about the year 1330. It is illustrated throughout with a series of drawings by two different hands, the one being very inferior to the other. The best hand has produced a most charming set of miniatures, very simple in treatment, and generally very delicate in the drawing. The colouring of the details of the figures and general accessories is light, but the designs are brought out in relief by the stronger colours of the background. Two of these miniatures form the subjects of Plate 16. In the upper one the artist has produced, with singular simplicity of drawing, a beautiful figure of the mighty angel casting a stone 'like a great millstone' into the sea (Rev. xviii. 21). The figure is altogether in outline without colour, and the nimbus alone is gilt. The sea is indicated by waving bands, coloured alternately straw-yellow and glass-green; and the background is of a very deep blue, with a broad frame of vermilion. In the other picture we have the representation of Heaven, where the Apostle heard 'a great voice of much people' (Rev. xix. 1-4). Here again the worshipping figures and the surrounding clouds are left white and are thrown up in strong relief by the deep blue of the background. The symbols of the Evangelists in the four corners, modified representations of the 'four beasts' that 'fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne,' are likewise in white against a background of vermilion; and the quarter-circle bands which mark off their compartments are in green. God the Father, holding the Lamb in His right hand











## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

and with His left hand placed upon the globe, is enthroned within a vesica; the robes are tinted russet, green, and violet; and the cruciform nimbus is vermillion and green. The broad band of the vesica is left white; the background within it is gilt, crossed with lattice-work in black lines; and the external corner-pieces are decorated with white leaves on a vermillion ground. The charm of these drawings lies altogether in their simplicity. There is a minimum of decoration, and the artist has relied only upon the clearness and firmness of his outlines to attain the desired effect.

The next example (Plate 17) is of quite a different character. It is chosen for the purpose of illustrating the development of the border in the early part of the fourteenth century. The volume from which it is selected is the Arundel MS. 83, the date of which can be pretty nearly ascertained. It contains the Psalter, with a calendar prefixed in the usual manner; but at the end a second calendar and a series of remarkable miniatures of scenes from the Life of Christ, etc., have been added. These additions were clearly not intended to be part of the original manuscript, but they are of the same period and are ornamented in the same style as the Psalter, and we are quite justified in treating them as contemporary. A note inserted in the second calendar (under 25th November) records the gift of the book, in 1339, by Robert de Lyle to his daughters, with remainder to the nuns of Chicksand Priory in Bedfordshire: 'Joe Robert de Lyle donay cest lyvere sus cest jour en lan nostre signour mil cccxxxix a ma fille Audere ove ma beneyssoun. Et apres soen deses a Alborou sa soer et issy de soer en soer taunk come ascune de eles vyvont. Et apres remeyne a touz jours a



## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

les dames de Chequesaundes. Escrit de ma meyn.' But the occurrence of the shields of England and France in the first border of the Psalter would lead us to infer that it was executed for the King or some member of the royal family.

The colour of the large D is vermillion heightened with white, and within its compass the two first Persons of the Trinity are enthroned under two architectural canopies, and are clad in robes tinted delicately with shades of blue, pink, vermillion, violet, and straw-yellow. The Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, is seen descending in the middle. The background is of bright gold, pounced. The letter is laid on a square of diapered patterns, which are worked on grounds of blue and lake alternately at the four corners. It will be seen that each of the two marginal extremities of the letter ends in a broad leaf encircled by the shoot on which it grows. These terminals, together with their broader backgrounds of gold and colour, form sufficient foundations on which to plant the stems for the border, which are seen to spring from a conventional foliated sheath and to throw out leaves in the progress of their growth upwards and downwards in the margin; and the whole design receives stability and breadth from a background of gold and colours which is shaped to the requirements of the stems. Coming to the corners of the page, fresh starting-points have to be devised, as explained above, and accordingly a broad foundation is again created for each by an interlaced knot or other ornament, produced from the stem itself, and then a new stem springs as before from its conventional sheath. And so the process is repeated at each point where a junction is required; and, for the sake of symmetry, also at the top of the page at the point

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

where the two columns of writing are divided, although no new stem springs thence as it does from the corresponding point in the lower margin. As in the decorative backing of the large initial, the colours in the border are almost entirely confined to blue and lake; and pounced gold is liberally employed, and particularly so at the corners.

A very pleasing feature in English decoration of this period is the introduction, among conventional flowers and foliage, of others drawn more closely after nature. A favourite flower thus treated is the daisy, which one may nearly always count upon to appear in an illuminated manuscript of the fourteenth century of English execution. In this plate we have daisies, oak leaves and acorns, and hazel nuts simply drawn and coloured. This practice may be strictly against the canon forbidding the mingling of the natural with the conventional, but, notwithstanding, there is something refreshing in finding such simple objects breaking out, just as in the department of botany Nature will sometimes assert herself by throwing out a shoot or leaf of the native strain from some plant of artificial cultivation.

One word may be said about the miniatures in this manuscript, although the limits necessarily imposed on the number of our illustrations do not allow of the reproduction of any of them. They form a very instructive series for the study of the miniaturist's method of work at this period. There is a full number of examples showing the variety which skill could produce in diapered backgrounds, and there are some notable specimens of elaborately patterned gold work; both of which styles of decoration have been referred to above as specially practised at this time. It is noticeable that a portion of

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

the series is composed of a set of leaves, each of which is covered on both sides with a set of subjects, six on a page. The backgrounds are alternately in diaper and gold, but so disposed that a gilt background never lies immediately behind a gilt background on the other side of the leaf. Thus the artist avoided making the leaf too thick by overlaying it on both sides with gold, and also guarded against injury to his work.

It is remarkable, though perhaps only accidental, that comparatively few illuminated manuscripts of the first rank have survived from the time of Edward the Third. The manuscript which has just been described belongs to quite the beginning of that reign, and has still the characteristics of the early years of the fourteenth century. The Louterell Psalter, a highly decorated volume which was executed before the year 1345, and which is described, with plates, in *Vetusta Monumenta*, vol. vi., is of a more advanced type; but it does not appear that any great stimulus was given to the art of illumination till the reign of Richard the Second, when we discover a school of painting which is remarkable for its fine colouring and richness of decoration.

Accordingly our next examples take us to the end of the century, and we see what a change the course of time has effected. Plate 18 is reproduced from a remarkably handsome volume, a very large Bible in the Royal collection, numbered 1 E. ix., which measures as much as 24 by 17 inches. It is splendidly illuminated with miniature-initials and initials and borders, the beginning of every Book having one or more of such decorations; and the workmanship is the best of its kind. The plate reproduces the initial which adorns St.



prologus

Isseus ieronim.  
dominoni et roga  
aano suis in xpo  
salutem. Quomodo  
gregorum historias  
magis intelligunt  
qui ethenias uide  
runt. et tatum in  
guy librum qui atro  
ade per leichyethi  
et accerituna ad  
syallam. et uide ad  
hostia tyberis nauu  
gaucunt. ita scām  
capturam lucidus intuebitur. qui uideam oculis contem  
platus est. et antiquarum urbium memorias. locorumque







## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

Jerome's prologue to the First Book of Chronicles, together with a small portion of the border which proceeds from it. The saint, dressed in a white under-robe, over which is a sleeveless upper-robe delicately coloured with lake, and wearing a broad hat brightly coloured with vermillion, is seated at a book-case (in which, in passing, we may notice the usual disposal of the volumes on their sides), and is apparently putting away his books. The background is worked in small square patterns of gold, red, or white on deep blue. The finished modelling of the features of the saint's face and the care with which the flesh tints have been applied are characteristic of English work of this period, and stand in strong contrast to the light strokes which were deemed sufficient to indicate the features of the human face in the drawings of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. This careful treatment is probably quite a native development; the method of French miniatures in this respect is altogether different; and it is to France rather than elsewhere that we should look for the source of foreign influence in English art at this time. We have, however, observed a very similar treatment in the contemporary miniatures of the Netherlands which have come under our notice, and we are inclined to see in our English work of this period a connection with the style of painting which afterwards, in the course of the second half of the fifteenth century, distinguished the Flemish school, so famous for the softness and depth of its colouring, from the flat and hard style affected by the miniaturists of France.

The letter itself is of vermillion, worked up in a floral pattern which fills the breadth of the bow, and it is set in gold with an edging of blue. And



## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

in this specimen we have an instance of the simpler border described above in which the main stems are formed of two combined narrow bars, the one gilt and the other coloured, and of the peculiar shape which the conventional foliage of English decoration had now assumed. The clustering of leaves at the points from whence the border-stems emerge is here in full force; blue, red, and lake, relieved with white, being the leading colours. Unfortunately the page of the manuscript is too large to be brought, even on a reduced scale, within the scope of a plate. We can only conclude our remarks on the border by asking the reader to repeat in imagination at the four corners of the page the round-flower ornament shown in this plate, and to take, as a sample of the twin stem which forms the square frame-work of the border, the small section here presented. Nor must we pass by in silence the very pretty ornamental spray which issues from the initial, with its delicate little flowers. It is not uncommon to meet examples of this fine work in company with more heavily laden borders.

A still better idea of the decoration of this manuscript, as applied to the border and ornamental-initial (to be distinguished from the miniature-initial of the last plate), may be gained from the second specimen which we give in Plate 19. Here the lower section of a column is reproduced, which shows a remarkably well designed initial P, standing at the head of the prologue to the Gospel of St. Mark, together with a portion of the lower line of the border and a portion of the stem which is carried between the columns. The letter itself is painted in sections of blue and lake, worked up with white, and is filled with interlaced branches of









## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

conventional foliage; and the whole is laid upon a square background of burnished gold. In the details of the scrolls and of the border we have blue, lake, and vermillion as the leading colours, with the usual proportion of gold; and here the various forms of the foliage may be studied: the curious feather-like curling leaf, the spoon-shaped leaf with its end well turned back, and, though less common, the bell-shaped flower—all of which, together with others not here represented, are met with as usual details of decoration in the English manuscripts of the time.

It is to be regretted that we know nothing of the history of this handsome volume, beyond the fact that it formed part of the library of the kings of England; and still more so, for our present purpose, that there is no record of the names of the artists employed on its embellishment. Even at this comparatively advanced time the practice of the artists of the earlier centuries not to attach their names to their works was still observed, and there are few exceptions. A notable one occurs, however, in the case of an English illuminator of this period who bore the name of John Siferwas, and to whom we owe a Lectionary (Harley ms. 7026) now in the British Museum, which he executed for John, Lord Lovel of Tichmersh, who died in the year 1408, and also a still more important manuscript, the Sherborne Missal, now owned by the Duke of Northumberland.

Of a somewhat later date than the manuscript Bible which has just been laid under contribution is the volume which supplies the next illustration. It also belongs to the Royal collection, numbered 2 A. xviii., and contains the Hours of the Virgin and the Psalter in Latin. The manuscript is orna-



## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

mented throughout with illuminated initials and borders; and at the beginning is a series of miniatures of saints and the very beautiful Annunciation which is here given (Plate 20) in coloured facsimile. It was executed early in the fifteenth century, as is evident both from the general style of illumination and from the costume of the two kneeling figures in the plate, the high-standing collar and long sleeves being typical of the dress of the reign of Henry the Fourth. These two figures, so refined in their treatment and adding so much charm to the miniature, are no doubt portraits of the husband and wife for one of whom the manuscript was executed, and we may almost assume that they were members of the family of Grandison, for in the calendar and fly-leaves entries of several obits of persons of that family have been added. Besides these entries, there are others of a later date which record births, marriages, and deaths, with other events, in the families of Henry the Seventh and Henry the Eighth; whence it appears most probable that the volume belonged at this later time to some person attached to the Court of the Tudor kings.

The miniature of the Annunciation has been selected for reproduction in colours as one of the best specimens of this class of English work that have survived. The drawing is very delicate and graceful, and the colouring soft and refined. The architectural setting is in keeping with the fashion of the day. We see the same style followed in French illumination, some of the best examples being found in the Book of Hours which was executed in France for the Regent John Duke of Bedford and which is now one of the greatest treasures of the British Museum. But to have

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

grafted on the solid stone work of the architectural canopy the meagre sprays of conventional leaves and flowers is a fault in composition which is probably due to a division of labour. The miniaturist who painted the figures, and no doubt also the canopy, would hardly have weakened the effect of his production by such extraneous additions. The illuminator who decorated the text with initials and borders surely added these sprays to fill up the blank spaces of the margins; and the same course has been followed with the other miniatures of the series. The modelling of the features of both the Virgin and the Angel Gabriel is here again as carefully treated as that in the miniature of St. Jerome described above, with a very pleasing result. Nor is there any shortcoming in the finish of the two kneeling figures; both are delicately drawn and coloured, and combine harmoniously with the miniature.<sup>1</sup>

A few details of a minute character in this plate may escape observation unless they are pointed out. Such details not only prove the utmost pains that the mediæval painter took to give the most complete finish to his work, but also suggest the very close examination which such works must have received from the eyes of our forefathers. Modern art has trained us to use our eyes in such a different way, to look so much more at general effect than at detail, that we have almost lost the faculty of taking into view the minute points which delighted the painter of the Middle Ages. In the upper left-hand corner in a cloud of blue appears God the Father with accompanying angels, and from Him

<sup>1</sup> Compare the painting of the faces in this miniature with that of the portrait of Richard the Second in the Diptych at Wilton House, published by the Arundel Society and described by Sir George Scharf, 1882.



#### ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

proceed delicate rays, at the extreme end of which the Holy Spirit, represented by the smallest possible white dove, hovers just above the Virgin's forehead. In the border of the nimbus round the Virgin's head is the inscription: 'Sancta [Mar]ia virgo, intercede pro [nobis]'; and round the Angel's head may be read: 'Sancte Gabriel, ora [pro nobis]'; along the edge of the canopy is: 'Maria, plena gracie, mater misericordie'; the open book has: 'Ecce ancilla domini, fiat michi secundum [verbum tuum]' (Luke i. 38); and, lastly, on the green cloth of the table is embroidered: 'Omnia levia sunt amanti: Si quis amat non laborat,' perhaps the expression of the artist's happiness in his work—a labour of love. But there is something more. The last inscription is followed by two words, 'de daer,' which may be only random letters to fill the line. It may, however, be suggested, although with much hesitation, that they should be reversed and that they then disclose the name of the artist, 'Ed. Read.'

But all this promise of the English school of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries was unfortunately unfulfilled. The long wars with France and the domestic convulsions of the War of the Roses seem to have extinguished the rising flame. The style which we have seen in such beauty in our last two examples gives place to one which is altogether French, so much so indeed that, but for internal indications of English origin, the manuscripts which are decorated in this new manner might, in many instances, pass for the productions of French artists. A well-known example is the great volume of romances of chivalry which John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, presented to Margaret of Anjou on her marriage with Henry the Sixth in 1445. The miniatures are of the hard and meagre











## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

type which is often so conspicuous in the French school of the fifteenth century, and the decoration is borrowed from the same source. The favour for this foreign style makes itself evident in the Books of Hours which were so much in demand at this time; and, when it begins to die out, there is no return to a native style, but the latter part of the century is marked by the predominating influence of the Flemish school. Whatever of purely English miniature painting exists at all of a later date than the early part of the fifteenth century is only in a rather coarse and rustic form: a proof that native art of this character received little encouragement. It is needless to speculate as to the development which it might have received under more kindly conditions; we can only say that in the productions of English artists, such as those which have been placed before us, there is evidence of powers which might have successfully competed with the best work of the continental schools of Western Europe in the latter part of the fifteenth century.

In the department, however, of the more mechanical work of the decorative border we still have instances of development in the course of the fifteenth century; and we place before the reader in Plate 21 the reproduction of a very fine specimen, executed before the year 1446. The volume from which it is obtained is the Arundel MS. 109, a Missal which was given to the Church of Saint Laurence in the Old Jewry by William Melreth, alderman of London, who died in that year. In this border we have a combination of the broad frame with the narrow stem design; and the more florid character of the details of the foliage, as compared with that of fifty years earlier, marks a

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

natural development. The principle of construction, however, still remains. Still the initial is the source and starting-point of the frame of the border; and we still have the massed foliage appended to the marginal extremities of the letter to form a sufficient foundation. The full development of curling, feather-like foliage is to be seen in the four corner circles, here forming in each instance the casing-leaves of a kind of pomegranate or nondescript conventional fruit. The narrow stems, as in the earlier examples, are still formed of two members joined together, the one in colours, the other gilt; blue, vermilion, lake, and green being employed in their decoration. The three broad sides of the frame are divided into compartments enclosing feather scrolls twined round rods; the colours used being green, grey-blue, vermilion, lake, and rose, and burnished gold being applied at the edges and largely at the corner-joints and middle sections. The same colours and gold are repeated in the conventional foliage. It is indeed a very handsome and effective piece of work, as a decorative page; but the design is poor as compared with those of the early part of the century, and the colouring cannot stand by the side of the rich and glowing hues of that promising period of our native school of illumination.

In the three articles which have now been contributed to these pages on the subject of English Illuminated Manuscripts the rise and growth of the art of book-decoration in this country have been briefly traced. We have seen that from the earliest times there was no lack of either mechanical or artistic skill. The wonderful decoration of the Irish school was practised successfully in the eighth century; and the freehand drawing of our artists

## ENGLISH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS


under the Anglo-Saxon kings was incomparably superior to the dead copies from Byzantine models which were in favour abroad. The artistic instinct was not destroyed, but rather strengthened, by the incoming of Norman influence; and of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there is abundant material to show that English book-decoration was then at least equal to that of neighbouring countries. For our art of the early fourteenth century we claim a still higher position, and contend that no other nation could at that time produce such graceful drawing. Certainly inferior to this high standard of drawing was the work of the latter part of that century; but still, as we have seen, in the miniatures and decorations of this time we have examples of a rising school of painting which bid fair to attain to a high standard of excellence, and which only failed from political causes.





01

9699-62

FA1120.206  
English illuminated manuscripts,  
Fine Arts Library, BAX1008  
  
3 2044 034 583 765

THE BORROWER WILL BE CHARGED  
AN OVERDUE FEE IF THIS BOOK IS NOT  
RETURNED TO THE LIBRARY ON OR  
BEFORE THE LAST DATE STAMPED  
BELOW. NON-RECEIPT OF OVERDUE  
NOTICES DOES NOT EXEMPT THE  
BORROWER FROM OVERDUE FEES.

BO INC.

AUG 22 1984

100 CAMBRIDGE STREET  
CHARLESTOWN, MASS.



FINE ARTS LIBRARY



3 2044 108 358 177

HD